




# ANDERS ZORN: HIS LIFE AND WORK...

KARL ASPLUND



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Karl Asplund



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# ANDERS ZORN : HIS LIFE AND WORK

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
1911



# ANDERS ZORN

## HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY DR. KARL ASPLUND



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*Zorn*

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# ANDERS ZORN: HIS LIFE AND WORK

## I. BIOGRAPHY.



To describe for a foreign public the art of a fellow-countryman is a task in which the writer feels the impossibility of complete success. A small nation, like a big one, has its own special qualities, its way of seeing and feeling, its special features in art and literature, easy for us to distinguish and detect, but almost impossible to communicate to those outside our own borders. As we ourselves are faced with the necessity of imbibing intellectual strength from without, we have been forced to acquire the adaptability necessary to sympathize with foreign feeling; but when a Swedish artist attains such a rank that he becomes universally known, his national characteristics still remain inaccessible to the world, while the qualities common to humanity find their way to the heart of the foreigner. Such Swedish artists as Roslin, Hall and Lafrensen—adaptable, refined, but superficial natures—had become quite French in their art; but Zorn, their only successor, whose name is known to the whole world, was partly cosmopolitan, partly a primitive Swede, or more correctly, a Dalecarlian. I am fully aware that it is quite impossible for me to convey to my readers the real idea of what the most profoundly national works of Zorn mean to us Swedes, and that consequently my account cannot do him real justice. But I shall endeavour to the best of my ability, to describe to the reader his artistic development, and to show the mutual relations of his works against a background of the *milieu* from which they had their origin.

In former and happier days Dalecarlia was a Swedish province well known to the tourist. It is an extensive region with deep pine-woods and mighty ridges, and with scattered tracts of settled country where ancient communities of heathen ancestry have grown up with their peculiar forms of life and culture, exceptionally well preserved owing to their great iso-



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lation from Sweden's more southern centres of culture. The Dalecarlians are a fine, vigorous race, still speaking on occasion their ancient dialects, and often living generation after generation on the same farm. They have played a certain part in the history of Sweden and they possess a calm self-confidence—a justified self-confidence, for they have been, and still are, one of the country's strongest and soundest elements, and during the course of time have given the nation one great personality after another.

One of the most ancient communities in this province, with records preserved even from the Viking times, is Mora, at the northern end of Lake Siljan, a country town that has been proud to see its name borne round the world as the birthplace of Anders Zorn. Like most of the Swedish countryside this place is now vulgarized and made ugly by the style of its modern buildings which show no respect for tradition; but here and there one can still see the old houses of red-painted pine logs, put together with ancient ingenious construction, sometimes, perhaps, with worn and cracked ornamentation that has survived from the Viking times. The town itself is no popular tourist resort except for its historical associations (it was here that in 1519 Gustav Vasa gathered together the peasantry for the rising that was the beginning of our liberation from Denmark and of the modern history of Sweden). But for miles round the woods surge over the ridges like enormous green carpets, embroidered here and there by bright glades with red-timbered mountain farms; on the horizon the outlines of the hills rise sharply in the pure air in a cold blue perspective. The landscape has nothing of the soft verdure and finely harmonized atmospheric tones of the more southern regions; everything stands out hard, pure and sharp in the clear air, and to the Southerner it seems as if the cold and the darkness never released their grip here, even when the sun is shining its brightest above the verdure and snowy-white stems of the birches in early summer, above the red cottages and the gaily-coloured garb of the hills; the shadows lie so

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sharp and, as a Frenchman once said, "le froid est là au fond." If we go into one of the old farms we shall find a series of low, cross-timbered houses with small windows divided into leaded panes, the cottages built together with the byres and other outhouses around a rectangular yard, and a staircase outside the wall leading to the low balcony built in on the upper storey. If we enter through the low doorway we may perhaps see, if we are lucky, an old-fashioned interior where, fixed to the walls in the corners, there are huge beds with their woven hangings of gaudy red, and an old painted grandfather's clock ticking loudly and slowly. The household furniture has interesting old-fashioned shapes, and on the walls there are, perhaps, some naïve old pictures from the Bible—King David or Solomon, in all his glory, dressed like stately Dalecarlians in their costumes of long black coats, red waistcoats, knee-breeches and broad black hats. As a rule, however, the old farms are modernised and display their electric light and piano and showy, commonplace ornaments. But one can always be certain of a kindly reception from the people of the house, with their good-natured sing-song dialect, which gives one a feeling of secure old-fashioned comfort.

One of these farms—situated at Utmeland near the small town of Nora—is called Gruddgarden, a small farm but sufficiently large to provide a family with a bare living. Like most of them it has belonged, as far back as one can follow the parish register, to the same family, whose members thus, according to custom, put the prefix "Grudd" before their baptismal name. In the middle of the nineteenth century the owner was Grudd Anders Persson. His daughter, Anna, used to work at a brewery in Stockholm during the summer. (It was very common for the Dalecarlian girls to go to Stockholm and work there in the summer, returning home in the autumn). On February 18th, 1860, her child, whose father was a German master-brewer called Leonard Zorn, was born at the farm of Gruddgarden; it was a boy, and at his baptism he received the name of Anders.

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The twenty-two-year-old mother continued her work in the Stockholm district the following summer; the boy grew up with his mother's parents and his life naturally followed the same lines as that of most other boys in Dalecarlia. While still small he used to go up to the mountain pastures and help to drive the cattle, and in due course he went to the Infant School at Mora. It is said that even when quite small he used to amuse himself by drawing figures on his slate, and at the age of seven or eight he showed great skill in carving spoons and such things out of wood.

Thus he passed through the Infant School, and when the question of his further studies arose he was able, owing to the interest of kindly benefactors, to enter the Grammar School at Enköping, which he attended for three years, 1872 to 1875. With a calm consciousness of his aims, the young Dalecarlian, who seems to have gained sympathy wherever he went, was more interested in cutting horses and men out of wood than in acquiring any store of knowledge at school. But even here he found people who were able to understand his artistic bent, perhaps even more his indomitable will to develop it, and, owing to the kindness of a well-known Stockholm manufacturer, Anton Bolinder, young Leonard, as he was then called, was able to leave Enköping for Stockholm, where he was to learn to be a sculptor, beginning by attending the sloyd school (nowadays the Technical School). He continued to draw portraits in pencil to the satisfaction of his clients, and some of his efforts were sent to the director of the Academy of Art, Professor John Boklund, an Academician and leading figure in those days, but whose dry and colourless art has no great interest for us to-day.

As a result of this incident the boy was admitted to the preparatory school of the Academy in the autumn of 1875. There is little to be said about his work in this institution under the old academic principles of teachers who had long ago given up their own dreams of creative art and had become worn-out old eccentrics. Even in the higher classes it was impossible for



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him to obtain any real artistic impulses ; it was purely technical knowledge that he acquired by means of methods to which he was rather indifferent. Not until 1879, when he was promoted to the highest class, the School of Painting, did he come into contact with one of the most thorough artists and strongest personalities in contemporary Swedish art, the famous portrait painter, Georg von Rosen.

But even here there was no very deep understanding between teacher and pupil. The course of instruction comprised subjects such as the history of art and the theory of perspective, and in the same calm spirit with which he had neglected Swedish history and arithmetic at the Grammar School of Enköping, he simply absented himself from these lessons and devoted himself instead to happy student life and to his water-colour painting, in which, as we shall see in the next chapter, he had already achieved considerable results by his own efforts. The outcome of this was that he received with great equanimity the last warning for neglect of his studies and left the old Academy School on March 17th, 1881, without any very great regret. Since that time he persisted obstinately in his dislike of the Academy, and it was only shortly before his death that the then world-famed master could be persuaded to become a member of this institution.

At the usual exhibition of the work of the pupils at the Academy in the spring of 1880 a water-colour had attracted a great deal of attention. It was Zorn's picture of a girl's head, *Mourning*, through which he became well-known in Sweden. His reputation as an artist rapidly increased ; he got orders for portraits, and, conscious of his high aims and endeavours, he executed these with such energy that the result was not only a series of good water-colour portraits, but also the saving of 4,000 crowns, by no means a contemptible sum at that time, though certainly less than would be paid now for a single one of these youthful works. For the young artist, however, it meant the chance to go out into the world, to new impulses, development, adventure and success.

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It was a strong and energetic youth of twenty, full of expectations in life and with a happy confidence in his own power, who, at the end of 1881, left Sweden and its confined, old-fashioned art; and the most natural thing for him to do was to steer his course to the countries where his admired Egron Landgren was enjoying life and creating small masterpieces. His first stay in London was not a long one, and after a couple of weeks he crossed to Paris and then went on to Spain, where he spent a very fruitful winter. Here he found what he had certainly longed for during the northern winters, sun, warmth, people with bright and cheerful spirits, and beautiful girls to paint and flirt with. He was able to embark on a little trip to Tangiers and to achieve success at an exhibition at Cadiz. He returned to London in the spring of 1882 with his portfolios full and with a new and fresh grasp of his art. He settled down at Richmond with Christian Bolinder, his countryman. I need not describe for an English reader summer-time at Richmond, but it is certain that the impression made on a Swede, especially a young and alert artist, must have been highly stimulating in a country where the trees grow higher, the sun is milder, and life is more pleasantly arranged than in other countries of the north. A strong young talent, an artist with something of Nature's intractable power of growth must certainly feel at home there. There are people who believe that a young artist *ought* to have difficulties and to experience poverty; that the deepest art arises from a longing that is not satisfied by reality. Others say that art flourishes best on the surplus of power and joy that life can give to the artist. It is quite certain that there are different sorts of art produced beneath the pressure of each of these conditions, and there are natures that receive spiritual benefit both from privation and from good fortune. Young Zorn was one of those who, from the beginning of his life, had to taste of the fruits of both adversity and success. He had a strong determination to get the best of what life had to offer and sometimes he carried it out; but his economic cir-

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cumstances often made it difficult for him even to live from hand to mouth. His friends in London often helped the inexperienced young artist, Christian Bolinder and Charles Armitage, an English business man, especially.

It is often related how Zorn made a bold resolution to rent an elegant studio so as to get a fashionable clientèle, while his circumstances compelled him generally to have his meals at public-houses or similar places. His first London studio was at Brook Street. His calculations were correct, orders came, he was able to dispose of the pictures of his travels in Spain, and to paint a number of portraits. Except for a visit to Sweden in the summer of 1883 and a journey to Portugal at the beginning of 1884, he lived in London till July 1885, when he came home to Stockholm.

In the spring of 1881, when executing a commission for a portrait, the poor young artist had met in Stockholm a young lady, Miss Emma Lamm, the daughter of a merchant, Martin O. Lamm, and her memory had not faded during his years abroad. It was a recognized young master who now returned home in order to become engaged to her. They were married on October 16th, and for their wedding tour they went to Hungary and Siebenbürgen, and then to Constantinople, where Zorn was taken ill with severe typhoid fever, which seemed as if it were going to put a premature end to his brilliant career as an artist. But the next year they were able to continue their journey via Greece, Italy, Paris and London.

In Sweden the Academy had naturally followed with great interest the triumphs of the young artist. They had tried to offer a conciliating hand by means of a medal and election to associateship, but these were refused. The critics complained that we could scarcely count him as a Swede. But even marriage was unable to keep him at home, and in January 1887 the young couple went away once more to Southern and sunny regions, to Algiers and Spain, and only the splendid and bracing summer in the Skerries could tempt them home. That summer in Dalarö saw the production of some of Zorn's most



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inspired and finest works in the medium of water-colour.

From the winter of 1887 up to 1893 we may look upon Zorn as chiefly a Parisian, though he certainly made long and frequent visits to Sweden in the summer. During these years his biography is really the description of his tenacious and successful work in a new field, oil painting, which will be described in a later chapter. From a creative point of view this first great period of the young master's art, in the glamour of an ever-extending fame in Paris and London, was certainly the most successful.

When in the spring of 1893 an exhibition of Swedish art was to be held at Chicago, Zorn with his connections over the world was felt to be the most suitable commissioner and so he was able to undertake his first journey to America. It is unnecessary to recall how highly his art was esteemed there. He stayed at first until the spring of 1894, made new friends, among others Mr. Charles Deering of Chicago, who, in the course of time, acquired the most valuable private collection of Zorn etchings, and rapidly became a fashionable portrait painter. These visits to America were repeated in 1896, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1903 and 1911.

A frequently quoted anecdote relates how, during a voyage over the Atlantic, Zorn's neighbour at table, a Frenchman, started a conversation with the question: "Vous êtes Suédois?" "Non, je suis Zorn," was the answer. If any importance can be attributed to an expression uttered at random, one would be inclined to say that Zorn now felt himself to be a cosmopolitan and—a Dalecarlian. To a question as to whether he came from Mora he would certainly have given an enthusiastic affirmative.

From about 1896, when his own home was ready in Mora, he began more and more to strike root there, or rather to return more often from his journeys abroad with the feeling that this was his home, that here his art had its real soil. After the last visit to Paris in 1906, with the great success of the exhibition at Durand-Ruels', Zorn, the traveller and cosmopolitan,



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became more and more a stay-at-home and a patriot. His works had gone all over the world to exhibitions and through the acquisitions of collectors, and their fame had continually increased ; but he himself became increasingly attached to his native place, to Stockholm and to the Skerries, which he only left for a couple of short journeys abroad, to Berlin in the spring of 1910 and to America in the spring of 1911. During these last years his life became identical with his work—and besides his paintings and etchings we must also include the great work he did for the advancement of culture.

I will try to give here a brief sketch of his life and himself during the last ten years, as it remains in one's memory. This Zorn of the last years, with the bearing of a prince of painters, a grand old man with the artist's overwhelming desire of life, a generous benefactor of everything connected with Swedish culture, has already become a historic figure, surrounded with a halo of oral tradition.

At Zorn's house in Mora he always spent a part of the autumn and winter, never omitting, with an inherited and pious feeling for tradition, to celebrate the festivals of the year according to the old Swedish ritual dear to him from his childhood. The home he had fitted up there was certainly more resplendent than any other artist's dwelling in Sweden. Quite close to Mora church, where his maternal ancestors had been buried for centuries and where he himself at last returned to them, he took the old cottage of Gruddgarden and other Mora buildings and combined them into a house whose imposing pine timbers with their carved old-fashioned ornamentation and cockloft were to his own taste, and from whose balcony he had a view over the river towards the pointed hills in the blue distance and right up towards the river valley, Alvdalen. On the way up there he constructed from old Dalecarlian cottages a more primitive, "more genuine" old Dalecarlian farmhouse, to which he retired when his deep sense of affinity with the old Mora culture made him feel the rapidly growing hamlet too modern and town-like. It was not

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sufficient to have only his own houses. Close to the High School for the People, built by him at Mora, he erected quite a museum, Gammalgården (the old farmhouse), which preserves with ethnographical accuracy the appearance of an old Dalecarlian farmhouse. His great interest and his continual joy centred more and more round these splendid wooden buildings and all that was associated with them, the primitive Dalecarlian paintings, the beautiful fabrics woven by the peasants, the sloyd household furniture. And to preserve the traditional dances, the motley-coloured national costumes, and the old peasant music on the fiddle and horns of birch-bark, he worked with a zeal and a success that made him one of the greatest forces in Sweden in the work of collecting material to throw light on the progress of mankind. In these efforts he had the skilful and interested help of his wife, who, especially eager to preserve the art of domestic sloyd among the women, achieved a great work and became popular and beloved in the district, regarded, like Zorn himself, with admiration by the people who looked upon him as one of their own, and were able to esteem the spirit of manly achievement that characterized his life's work in its different aspects, even if the cosmopolitan side of both his art and his gradually increasing art collections was unknown in this remote village. Here life was good and peaceful, here they drank brandy out of big Swedish silver cups from the time of the Renaissance, and brewed beer at Christmas according to good old recipes, and here Zorn painted and etched continuously, for when his gigantic nature grew tired of work and feasting, his best recreation was more work.

During recent years he had in a picturesque quarter of Stockholm, Söder, a house with a studio, splendidly furnished with old Flemish and Gothic tapestry; through the lofty studio windows he had a view over the town that we Swedes love and which polite foreigners usually call "The Venice of the North." Here there came a continuous stream of people who considered it an honour to be painted by the esteemed

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master, and of friends from the literary and artistic circles of Stockholm. There were also many scholars and young artists who sought help from him for work of one sort or another, and if it was a question of old Swedish culture or investigation with regard to the general development of civilization, there was no one who showed greater generosity or a wider outlook than Zorn, while, on the other hand, he was quite uninterested in the "new" art. Zorn occupied a special position in the artistic life of Stockholm; he was the authoritative, self-confident man who collected around him those with whom he got on well. In spite of his increasing ill-health during recent years, he still enjoyed life intensely. And even if, like all great men, he had his weaknesses, there always rested over him a certain halo of respect and interest, he was the central figure, whether it was a gathering of his own skittle club, or some big masquerade, or a merry party to celebrate the memory of Bellman, the incomparable Stockholm lyricist, whose profound significance for a Swede it would be hopeless to try to describe outside our own borders. One of the things that Zorn was most enthusiastic about during the last months of his life was the renovation of an old tavern preserved in the old town from Bellman's time (18th century).

There was another place where Zorn was one of the most popular figures and the most devoted habitués, namely the Skerries, outside Stockholm, that splendid place for yachting with its abundance of interesting fairways and its beautiful and varied northern scenery. Each spring he got his cutter, "Mejt," ready, and with a few guests, a couple of carefully chosen models, and a good supply of food, he went off on his usual summer yachting cruise, interrupted here and there at some of the bare rocks in the intense sunlight for the production of some bathing picture. His deep feeling of affinity with Nature made these cruises a spiritual and physical tonic. When in the summer of 1920 he was compelled to discontinue his cruise and came to town with fever in his blood, he was already a sick and broken man, although he would not admit



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it himself. He had just time to go from Stockholm home to Mora, where he was immediately taken to the hospital, there to undergo a dangerous operation. It failed to save his life. That September saw the end of a full, strong, artistic life that had begun sixty years before on the same spot, when a poor working woman gave birth to a child in the byre at Gruddgarden. Not only has his fame shed lustre on his birthplace, but he has interpreted its scenery and the life of its people in profoundly moving national works of art.

His collections will in the near future be formed into a Zorn Museum, in which his artistic remains and his art collections will be preserved, a parallel to what his friend Rodin has created at the Hôtel Biron as a posthumous monument to his fame. And as a motto for the collection his own, in the Mora dialect, may serve: "Gardi onums weiser wen an wilda." ("His works reveal his intentions.") The force of his will as an artist has caused these words to have a proud meaning; his work has become his real great memorial, to which all the books that have grown up around him and his art cannot add an atom.

The description of his art to which I now pass will only be a simple introduction to the study and enjoyment of an artist's work that has become known throughout the world, but whose deepest import is not easily accessible to the foreigner on account of its strongly national character.



## II. WATER-COLOURS

We have seen how even before going to school young Grudd Anders found his greatest pleasure in drawing what he saw around him, and how his friends enabled him to obtain his early training, to start that long and difficult struggle which results, in the best and rarest cases, in the production of capable, original or "great" art. The earliest water-colours and drawings which are still preserved give us an impression of the work of a clever draughtsman of a rather impersonal type, a boy who could portray a face with astonishing skill, as well as render the woodcuts of the illustrated papers characteristic of the period, or make a childishly banal picture of a Dalecarlian girl in a landscape; all this with a *savoir-faire* that made his friends in the Swedish country surmise powers of the scope of which they really had no suspicion. His teachers and fellow-students at the Academy watched with wonder the development of a young artist who would soon despise them with justifiable self-assurance. As a matter of fact the early portraits executed here and there by Zorn to earn a little towards his maintenance often show little more strength, from a purely artistic point of view, than those of his fellow-workers whose names are already disappearing in the limbo of oblivion. But there was an old Swedish artist who just at the time Zorn entered the Academy finished a long and eventful life, and whose work had the greatest influence on the young pupil. This was Egron Lundgren, the witty, epicurean artist, influenced by the English School of water-colour painting, whose pictures were at that time admired and sought after both in London and at home, in Stockholm. Egron Lundgren had developed for himself a rather original style in water-colour painting, influenced by elements as different as the drawings of Gavarni and Guys, John Phillips' Spanish scenes, and all the popular, but now somewhat forgotten members of the Old Water-Colour Society—Francis Topham senior, John Gilbert, Birket Foster, etc. An impressionistic insight that occasion-

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ally amounted to genius, a love, nurtured by the South, of glowing and luxuriant colour, and a purely masculine feeling for the charms of the beautiful young women of Spain, Italy and England, these are the qualities that constituted Lundgren's painting and had an electrifying effect on young Zorn when, at the commemoration Exhibition at the Academy in 1876, he had an opportunity to become acquainted with the paintings of his older countryman, which were at that time very highly appreciated but little understood. Zorn is Lundgren's direct heir, a fine and rare example of continuity in artistic talent. We shall soon see how he used the inheritance from his predecessor to produce a far greater fame. Zorn himself strongly felt the extent to which he was indebted to Lundgren for his early development, and once said to me that "without Egron Lundgren I should never have become an artist." As a matter of fact, from Zorn's first period as a water-colour painter (1875-1880) we have a few pictures left that may be characterized as entirely "Lundgrenian" in style and sentiment. There are examples of these in the pictures belonging to his estate, for instance a couple of self-portraits. But it was not long before the pupil outdistanced his master through his own talents and energy. In 1880 he put his name to a little oval portrait, entitled *Mourning*, of a girl (now in the National Museum in Stockholm). It represented the daughter of his hostess in Stockholm, a beautiful, young, happy girl, her soft features shaded by a mourning veil. This picture brought him fame at the Academy's exhibition in the same year, and the twenty-year-old youth was overwhelmed with orders for portraits, which he executed with virtuosity. The resemblances seem to be well seized; the water-colours glow with depth of colour, and the faces are modelled with a plasticity that has no counterpart in his predecessor's works. Even if he had not yet attained the impressionistic grace and the rapid effect of genius displayed in Lundgren's work, he showed from the very beginning greater energy and larger aims than his predecessor.

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Zorn appears now for the first time as a clever executor of portraits—a rôle he is to play on a larger scale later on. The results were somewhat uneven when he was not interested in the sitter, but among the works done to order there are some fine things, and portraits with good characterization, such as that of *Henrik Anckacrona*, a grand old military man and artist, or that of *Mrs. Heijdensköld*, where the white face, with its melancholy eyes, shines out from a dark background, with something almost Spanish in the style, as it seems, when one thinks of Zorn's journey to Spain the following year. A water-colour portrait of a beautiful young variety danseuse in Stockholm about 1881, in the possession of Mr. A. Jacobsen, has so strong a Spanish character that one would scarcely hesitate to assign it to the journey to Spain if it had not been dated. It was not the beautiful, passionate, proud type of woman we recall from many of Goya's portraits that was to capture the interest of the young painter, when, with funds acquired by painting portraits, he started for Spain. He saw the country with the same fresh, enamoured look as Lundgren, and he enjoyed painting the beautiful young women, sparkling with life. It was a different thing from painting to order portraits of old ladies and gentlemen in Stockholm. His art advanced greatly here, not through the influence of any tendency in Spanish art—it was only long afterwards that the impressions from Velázquez appeared in his oil-painting—but his fresh young artistic genius burst out into flame through contact with the inspiration of reality, and the colours danced like sparks across his water-colours. Thus, in the famous *Maternal Joy*, a young gipsy with her boy on her shoulder, the strong, vivid colours in the flowery dress, and the large coal-black surfaces formed by the hair and eyes, present an effective contrast. But the really inspired hymn to the beauty of the Spanish woman was the portrait *The Cousins* (one of the two sitters being the daughter of Professor Rodriguez in whose study Zorn painted at Seville). They are slender coquettish beauties, over whose dresses the brush



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seems to have danced along. But the shadows are still heavy and brown ; he is not quite ready with his own special style in water-colours.

Of course I do not know all the important works from these years of travel, fresh ones are continually appearing in the art trade, and I will not tire the reader even by a review of the greater number of the works he scattered about. With his water-colour box in his hand, a cigarette in his mouth, his eyes searching for beautiful subjects, he went along during this visit full of the creative joy of his early art, and this is how in a leisure hour at Gibraltar he sketched his own portrait in a brilliant little water-colour (in the National Museum, Stockholm). This portrait of himself, besides being an exquisite piece of painting, gives us an interesting impression of the young artist's confident and energetic features.

The summer of 1882 was marked by successful work at Richmond. With minute brushwork and bluish-green tones, interspersed with cold red, he depicted the garden of his friend, Mr. Bolinder, and painted his pretty model, or boating scenes on the Thames. The necessity to maintain himself by his work brought him a new series of commissions for portraits in London, which, perhaps, he executed more skilfully than those he did at Stockholm. Among these were the brilliant and characteristic *Count and Countess Stenbock*, and a portrait of the greatest interest both from a personal and an artistic point of view, that of *Axel Herman Haig*, the Swedish etcher, an amiable, smiling old man with a fine Viking beard. The head is seen in a strong light against a background of blue and brown. The influence on Zorn's artistic career of this meeting with the distinguished etcher will be noted in a later chapter. To these portraits also belongs one of his most charming pictures of children (Zorn's intuition and warm feelings made him an excellent painter of children), *The Sisters*, which has formed the basis of a beautiful etching.

After this first period of expansion of the sphere of his artistic *motifs*, of technical advance and new impressions, we get, dur-



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ing his visit home to Dalecarlia in 1883, the first harvest of pictures from his native place, with their conscious artistic qualities, clever, ardently minute studies of Dalecarlian lasses in their picturesque popular dresses; as yet the young water-colour painter is not the passionate amateur of the nude that he was to become later on. Now he paints scenes from peasant life, a young couple who have "fallen out" during harvest work, and the reverentially painted little picture of his grandmother, whose features we shall see again in one of his greatest water-colours. But the next year the English commissions for portraits once more claimed his clever brush; the young artist, eager to taste of life's joys, was not one to refuse to execute lucrative and useful orders. The portrait of his friend *Charles Armitage* is typical of this series—a dark but cool colour-scheme, powerful contrasts, a virtuosity in the painting of the texture in clothes and accessories and, presumably, the paying of great attention to the resemblance to his sitter.

But it was the portraits of beautiful young girls that he executed with greatest zeal, and the most inspired work of this year that I know depicts the smiling face of his friend *Mary*, with her fair, youthful head thrown backwards and her beautiful and abundant hair against a background of bright, sparkling yellow.

To a foreigner it seems as if the dominating feature in English water-colour painting—judging from what is seen and is popular at exhibitions and dealers' galleries—is a far-reaching technical skill, and a certain cool elegance. This feature is reflected in Zorn's early water-colours, while his inmost nature was of a more robust sort, as he showed at a later stage in his development. Never was his art so correctly elegant, so minutely careful, as during these years when it lacked the inner warmth and the exuberant strength of his later period. This is the case with the Spanish water-colours of 1884. A smiling Spanish woman in a sparkling yellow dress, sitting and playing the lute; the amiable little scherzo *Adios Maria*,

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a young Spanish boy gloomily saying good-bye to his sweetheart, some swiftly passing cloud of discord seeming to have dispelled their happiness under the radiant sky of a Spanish spring; even the erotic vision called *Rêve d'amour*, a woman stretched naked on a bed among fan-palms, a painting with the unmistakable gracefulness of the 'eighties, it is all the elegant "exhibition" work of a young man who understands his art and calmly watches it being appreciated. This skilful, anecdotal phase culminates in the water-colour *Flirtation* (1885), a young, smiling, robust woman, armed with the whole arsenal of feminine wiles, coquetting with a man sitting in front of her.

Even when at Dalarö he painted his young fiancée beneath the gaily shimmering surface of a Chinese parasol, smiling and immersed in building pleasant "castles in Spain," it is the happy play of a virtuoso with the colour, and the ardour of the artist-lover for his model is expressed playfully and courteously by making the parasol radiate like a halo behind the beautiful head of his sitter. The portrait of the Swedish captain of industry, *Christian Aspelin*, of the same year, is a substantial work full of character and masterly drawing.

These last-mentioned works appeared at the exhibition of "The Opponents" in Stockholm, the impressive display by which the able younger generation presented its declaration of independence to the tyrannous old Academy. It is difficult for us now to ascribe to these works any revolutionary character. Apart from the fact that a number of the representative pictures of these years (such as *Flirtation*) are of an extremely traditional type, with ancestors in the works of the English tourist artists of the 'fifties—one thinks for instance of John Phillips' gaily-painted sketches from Spanish life—they show scarcely any opposition to prevailing artistic tendencies, but a perfection of the ideals of semi-realism. Zorn was eagerly appreciated by the public, both at home and abroad, and he never became a revolutionary. He was one of those who calmly and clearly comprehend the tendencies of

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the time, and used them to express his own artistic ideas. These were partly the enthusiastic worship of the female form, and partly the inherited strong feeling for the sound and original ancient culture of Dalecarlia, for the race to which he felt so close an affinity. And in contemplating the artist whose character was just being created during these notable years of apprenticeship, we must not forget the tourist and man of the world, with his gaze turned outwards, or that element in his character which tempted him to continual excursions in search of new sensations in his choice of subjects.

If we can fix these three facts, and the corresponding inner qualities of the artist as the common chord pervading his art, I think it will be best to try to follow each of the elements separately, from the time when he began to be a mature artist, with something personal pervading his work beneath his skilful brushwork. The exact chronology of his production can easily be followed from the data of the biography.

Among the *motifs* from Dalecarlia, the first really important one, forming a norm for his subsequent view of art, is the beautiful and thoroughly sincere double portrait of his mother and sister (in the Gothenburg Museum). It is both a sincere and a clear-sighted conception that has left its impression on the pure, calm face of the mother, looking as if sculptured in a hard material, and the sister's childishly soft and caressing little form. The portrayal of the race given in this masterly water-colour is so deeply national that it can scarcely be expected to arouse an adequate response if not regarded with the joy of recognition.

The greatest and justly most celebrated work in this sphere is the water-colour called *Our Daily Bread* (Plate I), impressive both as a work of art and as a portrait. It is a picture of peasant life, akin in conception to the work of an artist such as Bastien Lepage, who was, as a matter of fact, one of the few men for whom Zorn, according to his own statement, really had a deep reverence. But Zorn's intimacy with his subject, his feeling of affinity with his model (the artist's mother)



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have given the picture a greater sincerity, a solemn feeling for the powers of simple life—work and food—of the same kind as pervades Millet's deeply serious pictures of peasant life. With a profound sense of the epic peace of everyday labour, the artist has drawn the old woman watching the food cooking down in the overgrown ditch, and the harvesters, who seem to move slowly in the fields in the background. From a technical point of view the water-colour is a masterpiece of extreme realism, a proof of honest study before which the spectator must bow, even if he sees the artistic ideals of the time looming in other directions.

It is of interest at this point to make a comparison with his next masterpieces in this phase of his art. We have to wait until 1890 for more water-colours of importance, the six pictures of the Mora fair. What has become of the study of detail? Disintegrated in patches of colour, merely painted without drawing, with perfect magic in the reproduction of the atmosphere and of the movements of the figures, the pictures stand there, specimens of the purest and most skilful impressionism. There is a rapid change in style and method of work during these years. The realist, the painter of details, becomes the impressionist. A study of Zorn's work with other *motifs* will show us how this remarkable transformation proceeded. "The realist who studies movement, there is the future impressionist," writes a Swedish critic in discussing Zorn's early painting. As far as Zorn is concerned this is probably true.

During his wedding tour in 1885 he was the acute observer of detail. With a stern sharp look he meets the gaze of the Hungarian *Executioner* beneath his bristling eyebrows and transfers him with photographic accuracy on to the paper, just like the *Gipsy Forge*, from the same district and the same year (in the Gothenburg Museum). But into his studies of water in movement something new, restless and living enters. In Constantinople he makes a snapshot of a *Caïque Rower* (in the National Museum) painted with broad, rapid strokes in glit-



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tering white and with sparkling and dancing waves. And the next year on his return to Sweden it is his delight out at Dalarö to capture the movement of the waves and observe the winding and capricious motion of the reflections and to transfer them to his paper.

These studies of water became one of Zorn's favourite occupations when he started water-colour painting. At Algiers in 1887 he painted one of his most important drawings, *Algiers Harbour*, with a couple of veiled women sitting on some stone steps in the foreground, the gently billowing water filling out the picture in the background. During the summer at home in Dalarö he painted three large important water-colours with *motifs* taken from the water. They are *The Lapping of the Waves* (in the Copenhagen Museum), *Summer* (C. R. Lemm's collection), and *Bathing Women* (in private possession in Stockholm).

*The Lapping of the Waves* (Plate II) gives us a characteristic view from these summer resorts near Stockholm. On the landing-stage in the foreground a healthy-looking maid-servant is getting water, a lady and a gentleman are sitting on another landing-stage in the distance, and in the background we get a glimpse of red and white cottages and villas amidst the verdure. *Summer*, with its contrast, peculiar to Zorn, between the minute portrayal of details and the unfinished sketching in the foreground, gives us a subject to which Zorn returned on countless occasions, women bathing from the bare rocks of the islands, caressed by the warm summer light. The third water-colour, in a fine golden tone, like that of the early paintings with the same *motif*, shows us a woman standing in the foreground in the shadow of the trees with her back turned to the spectator.

The *motif* of the bathing woman is repeated in the large water-colour called *Une première*, to be found in the National Museum and reproduced in one of Zorn's finest and best-known etchings. A mature woman, in ample and heavy outline, is seen taking her little boy into the gently rippling water. The

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tone is wonderfully soft, there is no trace of chalkiness or coldness in the colouring, and the play of blue, grey, yellow and rose colour is pleasing to the eye. This water-colour now hangs as one of the greatest treasures in our not contemptible National Museum, and the visitor will notice with surprise some powerful slashes with a knife through the paper. This is not a Swedish suffragette outrage, but the artist's expression of his own discontent with his work. To us these slashes are a symbol of his attempt to attain the impossible. If in seeking for an open-air effect, a pictorial tone, and correct drawing his aim was higher than this, it is difficult for us to imagine the ideal that loomed before him. It seems to us as if he never approached closer to perfection than in this picture. The following year it was executed in oil colours in a different tone and technique (Plate V).

Zorn's pictures of water deserve a few words to themselves. Soft and delicate tones are first applied, and after the paint has dried follow a few rapid, winding, dark strokes of the brush. With this formula he is able to produce a striking impression of reality. It is said that when these water-colours were first exhibited in Stockholm they aroused the anger of the older connoisseurs and called forth the usual phrase—"This isn't how it looks." When these worthies went down to the stream that runs glitteringly and playfully just outside the Academy of Art and really used their eyes in an unprejudiced way, they saw and admitted that young Zorn was right. It was a blow to the old formula for reproducing the motion of water. Zorn often had in his time the power of remoulding people's way of looking, of exemplifying Wilde's paradox that "life imitates art," that is if art is the fresh product of a conception realised by the eye of genius.

These paintings of the nude and of water are the main feature of Zorn's work during this period when he becomes an impressionist and a colourist. It is impossible to force such varying artistic productions as his into a strict scheme, and we can only try to supplement the account of his water-colour painting by

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referring to a few scattered pictures from his journeys. When we left him in Siebenbürgen he was still a careful painter of realistic studies rich in detail, and we may see that he remains so in these tourist *motifs*, in which the details of the subject interest his eye. This is the case in the works from Algiers in 1887, the above-mentioned *Algiers Harbour*, and *An Algerian Interior*, with a Bedouin girl standing there shining like bronze and healthy as a young lioness. A couple of male forms are faintly visible in the background. It is the spirit of Benjamin Constant that hovers over this fresh and elegant picture.

The winter of 1887, spent in Spain, saw the fine interior *La Feria*, depicting a young girl, tired and wanton, leaning against the bed and seductively drawing the hangings aside, a fresh and witty painting; and later on in the same year we get one of his most finished water-colours, *The Fish Market, St. Ives*, depicting with *bravura* the shore and the haul of giant cods lying there. In the background some boats are seen on the calm water. A buxom woman stands in the foreground; it is the same model as is seen in one of his very earliest oil paintings.

Finally a few words on the later water-colour portraits, the originals of which are unfortunately in most cases not known to me. The portrait of Aspelin marks the climax in the development of the simple pose and sharply drawn type. Many portraits were executed for Sir Ernest Cassel during 1886 and later years. A little boy's head from 1887 shows a radiant freshness and freedom in the treatment; all the sharpness and dark shadows are gone (Mr. Thorsten Laurin's collection). One of Zorn's most important water-colours is a portrait of *The May Children* which, at Sir Ernest Cassel's request, was painted in Paris in 1888. This commission was of importance for the artist's career, not only as a brilliant work but also because it was the reason for his visit to Paris, where he settled that year and remained for a long period, gaining his greatest triumphs up to that time. *The May Children*, a picture of

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four children playing on the floor in their nursery, is a piece of work that is apparently casual, but at the same time well balanced. The central point of the composition is the face of a girl lying flat down in the foreground and seen straight from the front, with her mischievous bright eyes fixed inquisitively on the outside world, a masterpiece of illusionist drawing. The same year saw the portrait of *Rosita Mauri*, the danseuse, which, if one may judge from reproductions, is one of Zorn's finest works, revealing almost a mundane worship of young feminine beauty, as she stands there with her starry eyes beneath the dark hair shining out of the fair tones of the dress and the room. This portrait was followed during the following years by several others of French ladies, among them that of *Mme. George May*, reproduced as an etching. But at that time, as we know, the artist devoted himself almost entirely to oil painting. In the next chapter we shall discuss this transition and the brilliant development that immediately followed it.





"OUR DAILY BREAD." (1886)





"THE LAPPING OF THE WAVES," (1847)







" HEAD OF A SPANISH GIRL." (1889)





"THE MARKET, MORA." (1890)





### III. EARLY OIL PAINTINGS

Zorn would certainly have been able to enter upon a still more brilliant career as a water-colour painter, but a certain dissatisfaction with his material seems to have impelled him to try his hand at oil painting. As a matter of fact he had chosen water-colour in the beginning simply because it was a cheaper medium for the young artist. The two large and mellow works of 1888, already mentioned, *The Fish Market* and *Une Première*, show quite clearly how he was aiming at more powerful effects than water-colour can generally give. Even if in his water-colours he attained as great power in execution as could well be desired, it is easy to understand his wish to try oil painting with its greater resources for giving atmospheric tones, plasticity and richness of colour. That important event in the history of Swedish art, the beginning of Zorn's oil painting, is usually assigned to the winter of 1887-1888, quite correctly inasmuch as he then suddenly appears as a finished master of this technique with his *Fisherman of St. Ives*. But one cannot help wondering how it was he achieved this sudden success, with the accompanying medal and the purchase of the picture by the French State, and—what is more remarkable—the production of a permanent masterpiece. And we find that during the previous years he had experimented more than once with canvas and palette, even though the work just mentioned, on account of its great scope, will always appear as a sudden revelation in his art.

I leave out of consideration here an early attempt of his school-days in oils which has, of course, only the interest attached to a curiosity. But we have another surprising early work which certainly does not give one the impression of a curiosity, but rather of being the result of a clever and trained impressionist's skill in oil painting. It is a little interior, recently acquired for the artist's own collection after being formerly in Germany. The year of the signature, 1883, is

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startling. But it is undeniably the above-mentioned studio in Brook Street to which this delicate picture takes us back. Before the motley daubs of the water-colour paintings hanging on the wall there stands a young lady in a black dress. 'The bouquet of paper flowers on the mantelpiece, the English fire-irons of shining brass, all these things give us an idea of the comfortable and prosperous character of the artist's studio. On the wall we easily recognize the above-mentioned water-colour *In Mourning*, the portrait of the artist from Gibraltar, and the large portrait of Miss Symonds which now remains among Zorn's estate. This *tour de force* is an alluring incitement to continue the search for still earlier oil paintings that one is tempted to say must inevitably be in existence.

I do not know of any oil painting of the following year. Many water-colours were produced during the artist's continuous journeys, for the apparatus necessary for water-colours was, of course, best adapted for the rapid annotations of impressions during travel.

But Zorn's arrival in Paris also brought about an increased interest in oil painting. The skill in manipulating paint, the delicate and dainty brushwork of which the Parisian artists of the 'eighties, with Manet at their head, were such great exponents, must have tempted Zorn. And once more he shows us his remarkable power of acquiring a new feature in his art. There are some paintings that can certainly be referred to this time. In the winter of 1885-1886 he painted, according to his own statement, the water-colour called *Le Tub*, and about the same time a delicate sketch in oils with the same subject in grey and rose colour, showing distinct traces of French impressionism, both in the combination of colours and arrangement.

In 1887, at any rate, Zorn tackled the problems of oil painting in earnest, and was obviously trying to extract fresh possibilities from the new material. A portrait of Alice Miller, the exact date of which is not certain, but at all events pro-

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duced before *The Fisherman of St. Ives*, is painted severely, clearly and coldly in grey and brown tones. One feels how the artist has tried to come to close quarters with reality. The brownish-grey tone is stronger in an incomplete painting of the same time, a sketch of a little English girl which has been obtained from Germany and placed in the Brodin collection in Stockholm.

At St. Ives he painted, presumably shortly before the great success of *The Fisherman*, the amusing interior *By the Fireplace*, showing a stout woman speaking to a man of whom we see only a rather imposing and expressive back. It is the same woman as served for the model in the above-mentioned *Fish Market*. The tone is cold, grey, blue and brown, with a vermillion firelight, and the merit of the picture consists in the witty characterization and the fine brushwork. But this is not the Zorn of the best-known early paintings; he has not yet attained the warm, sensitive colouring. It is in *The Fisherman* that he first appears as a finished and accomplished colourist, and the result achieved here was the first step on the great high-road which he now entered in his youthful triumph. It is evident that he set to work with great technical knowledge in handling paints. The only preliminary for this picture known to me, a study of the woman's head in back view, in a private collection in Sweden, is the work of a master, one of those deeply felt, rapid sketches made with the joy of a painter, which in their modesty reveal unintentionally the real greatness of the artist.

*The Fisherman of St. Ives* is typical of the period with the large oblique plane in the foreground and the exceedingly fine balance of the composition in other respects. The colour has a delicate French tone of dry, subdued greyish-brown—"ces tons écrus ou de cigares blonds," as Paul Metz wrote when it was exhibited at the Salon in 1888 and achieved its famous success.

Then the victory was to be completed. In Paris he tried for the first time in 1888 larger portraits in oil—*Mr. and Mrs.*



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*Ernest May*—and the same year he executed the small sketch *Self-portrait* (Plate VI.) The next great achievement was in Dalecarlia in the summer with *Out*. It is the first great work in the long series of women bathing in the open air, and one of the works of this class showing the greatest vitality. There is in the painting a joy of discovery and an exulting rapture at the splendour of summer and at the consciousness of being able to give artistic expression of a greater range and *pondus* than before. But the feeling expressed in the *motif* is also more gentle and more modest than in the works of the same subject of later years. The tone, as in *Fisherman at St. Ives*, is subdued with French daintiness; to quote once more a French critic of the Salon of 1889 when it was exhibited, it is “une eau d’or pâle—trouvaille de palette.” The French critics compared the artist to Besnard; Geffroi speaks quite correctly of the pastel-like nature of the workmanship, the light, one might almost say airy, touch, a characteristic feature of much of Zorn’s oil painting from his earlier years and one that displays, as it were, a desire to wrap the *motif* in the atmosphere. The picture was appreciated very highly at the Salon; it is true that even then there was already talk of empty virtuosity, but its cleverness was recognized in very different camps, even down to “*La Vie Parisienne*,” which jokingly informed its readers that Bougereau, the fashionable painter, had bought the picture “pour apprendre le plein air et pour admirer.”

Around *Out* are grouped several cognate masterpieces—it was as if the victory was an incitement to work. I need only mention *Une Première* (Plate V), first painted in water-colours, then in three copies in oil, one of which is in the museum at Ghent. There is a shimmering tone of light grey in this picture, which was painted a second time very much later in another colour scale, a gold tone. To the great bathing scenes of this period there also belong *With his Mother*, in Mr. John Gardener’s collection; *The Skerry*, in the National Gallery in Christiania; and *In the Open Air* or *A woman dress-*

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*ing her child under the alders after bathing*, known from the etching. Some sketches kept among Zorn's effects may also be grouped with these important works, the results of a summer filled with exceedingly abundant and successful creation. There was not much opportunity for portrait painting, as the painting of the nude in the open air had so entirely captivated the artist. We have to note a little *impromptu* from Stockholm, *Kurre* (a young relation of the artist's wife), painted by the twenty-five-year-old Uncle Anders in a few swift strokes. The bright little head of the boy is brilliantly and lightly modelled with the pastel-like strokes we have just mentioned; the rest is boldly sketched with a yellow sunbeam striking like lightning in the background.

But in Paris in the autumn a picture presenting a greater problem was painted; and this has recently made the journey from Paris to Stockholm, a process that is not unusual now for Zorn's masterpieces. During the next year, 1889, we see his growing mastery of the art of portrait painting; to a certain extent he is now finished with the problems connected with painting the nude in the open air, and he now proceeds to his first great victories in the sphere of portraiture, *Coquelin* (Plate VIII), *Mme. Rikoff*; *Portrait of the Artist* (at the Uffizi); and *Charles Armitage*. Of the other portraits from this year I know nothing but the names. For Sir Ernest Cassel—for whom later on he did a good deal of work—he painted a portrait of that gentleman's wife and also one of a Mrs. Weguelin. The two first-mentioned portraits, those of Coquelin and Mme. Rikoff, are to some extent companion pictures, both being, one may say, purely impressionistic. Coquelin appears in his dressing-gown and whispers an amiable greeting; Mme. Rikoff stands in a dusky ante-chamber and has just taken off her fur cloak. The portrait of Coquelin is one of the works of Zorn that have been most appreciated and continually mentioned and reproduced. It is astonishing to see how, in one of his first large portraits in oil, Zorn has, in the first place, achieved such perfect mastery of

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the style of the period, and, secondly, discovered a form of portrait-painting with the sober grey harmony, the long sweeping brushwork, and the economy in the patches of colour, features that can be said to be characteristics of his own and to which he often returns, though not always with the same success. The affinity of this type of portrait with the work of Sargent has often been observed; this appears still more in the portraits of ladies, such as that of Mme. Rikoff. The portrait of Charles Armitage, which is in the possession of this faithful friend of Zorn from his first years in England, shows the sitter in a grey coat, with grey nuances tinged with brown over the whole picture, in the clothes, the background, and the cigar boxes on the table. But a few vivid colours break the monotony, a green book on the table, a ring with a green stone, and the brick-red mantelpiece in the background. This portrait is typical of the informality of the impressionistic art of portraiture, its everyday nature, which were the watchwords for its great master and which are especially striking in the works of Manet and Degas. Even the portrait of the artist at the Uffizi, so well known from reproductions, has this impressionistic character; he was anxious to give the impression that in the midst of his work he had, as it were, chanced to see his reflection in a mirror. (He has the bust of his wife in front of him). Here, as in the three portraits previously mentioned, there are features in the arrangement that re-appear in later portraits. The year 1889 was certainly a very important year for the formation of Zorn's style in portrait painting.

There remains the question as to how the new and abundant conquests in the sphere of the nude and the open air were continued this year, to which there is an overwhelming answer—*Les Baigneuses* (Plate VII) and *Reflections*, both from Dalarö, portraying in different keys the freshness and splendour of the summer in the islands and the beauty of the young female figure. *Les Baigneuses* is a harmony in grey, a dainty French grey, applied with a rapturous joy in the



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work. It is of great interest to see how the *motif* was transformed from the first groping attempts. One of the sketches with which Zorn wished to "feel his way" is among his estate, boldly and originally sketched, with the straight and supple female figure in the strong sunlight. Here we have an indication of the tone; if we turn to the finished picture we see the composition worked out, the idea developed into a masterpiece without flaw or blemish. How finely the utmost skill and the deepest and freshest feeling is balanced in a work like this! With what rare beauty the perfect form clothes the spirit that it contains!

A warmer and more golden tone pervades *Reflections*. It is the golden light of the sun at noon that floods the calm bay, and in the midst of this rich gold the blue shadow falls on the water in the foreground. It is a purely pictorial method of composition, to which one can point when it is said that Zorn's conception was preponderantly formal and photographic. The composition is to be connected with the above-mentioned *With his Mother*. The bathing creek, with the high horizon, curves in an imposing bend over the greater part of the canvas, and this curve is filled with the play of glittering waves, with the nude figure of the woman as the point of concentration—it is a typical Zorn composition which we shall meet later on in various forms. The high horizon, a fashion from the time of Whistler, which probably appeared outrageously bold to the older observers, gives the artist an opportunity for a richer concentration of all that interested him. The figure, the movement of the waves, and the play of sunshine on the precious things of the earth, all these are gathered together on the canvas with the same joy as that of an early Fleming depicting his landscape beneath the high horizon.

The important new element in Zorn's painting during this year was the portrayal of peasant life from Dalecarlia, represented by the two products of his visit to Mora—*Rowing to Church* (Plate IX) and *Baking Bread* (Plate X). Here Zorn applies the lessons he has learnt in France to his own sphere,



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to the *motifs* that he must often have longed for while in the Paris studios. There was nostalgia in the blood of our artists in Paris at that time, and how affectionately they interpreted their own land when they returned home ! One work depicts a picturesque scene presented by the peasants rowing in their long narrow boats of ancient type to the church over Lake Siljan, which lies shining and slightly hazy in the morning sun, one of those picturesque scenes from the life of the people that will soon be only a memory. The brilliant colours seem, as it were, to have touched slumbering chords in the artist, and, although subdued compared with the vivid colours of later years, there appears here a rustic richness of tone that has never sprung forth in the Paris studio. One of the sketches, a church-boat, shows quite a wonderfully complete success in reproducing the clear, moist morning air over the water.

In *Baking Bread* the returned young master revels in the use of all the knowledge gained in Paris and his familiarity with the painting of effects of light ; a subject which had obtained by his treatment a simple homely pathos. The baking is going on in the living-room, the two peasant women being, as a matter of fact, the artist's mother and sister,—and this *motif* has given the skilful impressionist a complicated problem of light and shade to solve, a double illumination from two windows and firelight. The colour scheme embraces brown and grey, with a little gold for the light and some of those strong patches of colour of which the artist was so fond. It is remarkable to find that with this richly productive visit home in his thirtieth year Zorn had brought under the dominion of his brush almost all that constituted later on the sphere of his art : pictures of the nude in the bathing scenes ; portraits ; the Dalecarlian open-air scenes ; and the complicated problem of light and shade in interiors. It was practically during a period of two years, from the autumn of 1887 to that of 1889, that he became the finished master in oil painting in spite of all reservation and all the work of minor import-

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ance that he produced. But for some years longer his art still retained that feature of youthfulness which pervaded the work we have now been discussing, a feature that in many respects is equivalent to the strong impressions of his studies in France.

During the following year, 1890, he entered a sphere of work which he really never mastered, pure landscape painting. The basis of this aspect of his art was entirely French, whether it be the noble park of the Isle d'Adam or Skeppsholmen in Stockholm that he was painting.

Several landscapes from 1890 and the subsequent years originate from France. *Isle d'Adam* is the largest canvas, quite French in its noble grey verdure, but not entirely convincing and strongly felt. But among the small sketches there are several small impressionistic masterpieces, executed in the peculiar bright, dry tone of green that so often characterizes French summer landscapes. Some of the later sketches of 1892 or 1894, which may be mentioned in this connection, show a surprising dependence on French style, one of them having quite a Sisley-like character, far removed from the landscapes of uniform green that we remember from the artist's later years.

The picture from Stockholm forms an interesting episode in Zorn's art. Composed with a large triangle in the foreground, just as in *Fisherman of St. Ives*, it also has the *ton de cigare blond* mentioned in connection with that picture. A couple of sketches with the same *motif* are left, one giving only the design, simply the water, the town and the air in a few fresh and clear strokes of the brush; the other with the whole composition settled and a fascinating freshness in the colour and the structure. But all the same, this was not a sphere in which Zorn's individuality was able to make itself strongly felt; the charm in these pictures is more that of the period than of the artist's personality, even though the skill of the workmanship is quite characteristic of Zorn.

Of the principal departments of his work Zorn really culti-

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vated only portrait and interior painting during 1890. There were but few additions to his paintings of the nude, *Été*, exhibited at the Salon, and the water-colours previously mentioned. On the other hand, in portraiture there were a couple of works for Sir Ernest Cassel and some Parisian portraits, Parisian not only in *motif* but in spirit. There were the two portraits of Monsieur and Madame Rikoff, exhibited at the Salon, the latter under the title of *Etude d'Eclairage*, and both now acquired for a private collection in Sweden. It attracted much attention because of its virtuosity, and quite rightly, as it presented once more a complicated problem by a cross-fire of lights, the warm yellow light of the interior that is reflected around the charming lady in delicate tones of orange and rose. Extreme virtuosity and artificial arrangement are here lying in wait, and it would have been dangerous to have continued in this direction. And in the portraits executed at home Zorn went in for other methods; the excellent portrait of Herman Lamm is simple and straightforward, with an echo of the colour scheme of the *Coquelin*, sober grey, a fresh ruddy complexion, and a patch of green colour in the background. Another contemporary portrait, which was praised for its strikingly characteristic nature, was that of Fritiof Antell (the founder of the Antell collection at Helsingfors) which, however, the owner burned in a fit of temper at the too unflattering realism in the representation.

The most remarkable pictures of this year were, however, the interiors from the Hamburg brewery, three pictures with varying names; according to Mr. Thorsten Laurin's catalogue they are *Bottle-washing* (belonging to Mrs. Potter-Palmer in Chicago); *Brewery* (to Mrs. V. Heiss); and finally *Interior of a Brewery* (Plate XI) (in Mr. Laurin's collection), the latter being the basis of the etching called *The big Brewery*. These paintings scarcely have any very strong personal interest, a defect that is often inherent in the impression with its significance entirely concentrated in the skill of the eye and the hand. The conception is most closely comparable to that of Lieber-



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mann, another famous impressionist. *The big Brewery* shows a new compositional touch in the painting of interiors; just as the late Renaissance masters took to oblique perspective in order to produce a stronger impression of space, so here Zorn has passed from the frontality of *Baking Bread* and has made the row of Dalecarlian girls pasting their labels project obliquely inwards towards the hazy background. But here, too, we see what strong use Zorn makes of the atmospheric values as factors in the formation of space; if we look at the left half alone of the picture the impression of the remoteness of the figures in the background is almost equally great. This method of producing a convincingly real portrayal of space by means of an oblique perspective is used again in *Omnibus* and *Sunday Morning* (Plate XIV), and even as late as in *The Lace-workers in Venice*, painted in 1894.

To the portraiture of the following year belong some good French pictures, the very much admired portrait of his friend Faure, the opera singer, the amateur who gathered together the famous collection we recently had the pleasure of seeing return to Sweden. These *genre* portraits had always constituted one of Zorn's favourite occupations, in which the next year he achieved the great success of *A Toast at Idun*. The group represents some Swedish scholars at a gathering of the Idun Society, a union for artists and men of letters at Stockholm. The stout speaker in the foreground, who, to judge from the characteristic movement with his glass of whisky, recorded with sure strokes by the artist, is certainly making a witty and telling speech, is Harald Wieselgren, and among those who appear in the background is A. E. Nordenskiöld, the famous discoverer of the North-East Passage. This masterpiece, with its broad and bold brushwork and its strong play of light, is typical of Zorn at the height of his art and ushers in a new period of his activity as a portrait painter. A couple of other Swedish portraits, *Mr. and Mrs. Haiss*, are also already what is called distinctively Zornian. A comparison with the above-mentioned portraits of the Rikoffs shows



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how Zorn's methods of expression had been revived. The portrait of Mr. Haiss especially has many qualities that are closely akin to it among the portraits of the latest years. But the same year Zorn produced such a distinctively French work as the splendid female portrait in green, a Parisian lady whose appearance is the product of an inspired and caressing brush, and whose dark green and black dress is traversed with a diagonal line of the bright and pure rose colour of the lining of her cloak, a composition produced from a purely colourist's point of view. Better known owing to its reproduction in one of Zorn's best etchings is the witty picture of *The Cigarette Smoker*, a radiantly fresh and naturally beautiful representation of a young lady. Then begins the long series of American portraits. His production in Paris during this year also includes two works whose names are well-known, *Venus de la Villette* and *The Waltz*, the originals of which I have unfortunately not seen. Like the picture just mentioned they have both formed the basis of notable etchings.

The Mora pictures of this year are well-known to us owing to the fact that four of them, all important works, have been restored to Sweden from abroad—*Sunday Morning* (Plate XIV) a couple of years ago, and *Margit* (Plate XII), *Opal* (Plate XIII), and *Midnight* (Plate XV) recently. It was a happy hour that saw the production of these works. They radiate the joy and harmony of newly-acquired mastery.

*Sunday Morning* shows us the toilette in the cottage and the warm golden tone we have so often mentioned before fills the room with a living atmosphere and gives just the indication of the peace and calm happiness of a holy day that is suitable to the *motif*. The touches of feeling in the colour and the subject here combine into a profound and transfigured unity. The other canvas with a similar *motif* is *Margit*, the girl plaiting her bright golden hair, one of the freshest and most mellow fruits of Swedish painting. It has probably arisen in connection with *Sunday Morning*, to judge from the stooping figure standing in the background. We see that the problem of the

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room is not solved here at all; the interest is concentrated on the figure, the girl in glowing red and yellow, radiating with vital warmth and health. This beautiful Rubens-like mellow colour is, as far as I know, a rather isolated touch in Zorn's work, where it seems to me to occupy an honourable place.

The picture of Lake Siljan, *Midnight*, is also rather unique and a work of great value. It does not show the usual noble, discreet colouring of the early years, but a motley touch, though it has the harmony of the mild twilight atmosphere. One cannot fail immediately to compare it with the earlier *Rowing to Church*—it can really be said that they are like day and night. *Midnight* has a strongly romantic atmosphere, which has not been volatilized during the execution. To a Swede this atmosphere is electrifying with the strength of familiarity, and of course its effect was especially strong on the artist who happened to have returned from foreign parts. The scene has been captured and reproduced with deep intuition—the silence, the bright, moist air, the scent of foliage from the shore drifting out over the water, with the warmer currents of air, and perhaps the music of a rustic fiddle, far off by the maypole.

*Opal*, as it is called, with the Frenchman's knack of finding exactly the right word to symbolize a subject, carries on the tradition of the bathing scenes right from the water-colours *Summer* and *In the Open* to the whole series of works mentioned here. And it is surely the most euphonious interpretation of this *motif*. The calm water has a pale glitter, and the cottages of Mora are bathed in the sunshine. Within the verdure, with its shimmer of light grey, the rays of the sun peep to caress the backs of the two bathing girls. The tone is fine, pale and delicate, and the picture breathes a spirit of rare and precious calm and summer happiness. It is, as far as I know, the last of these bathing scenes in which the pale, light and richly modulated colour from the Paris period is still predominant.

The next year there were added to these masterly pictures

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from Mora a couple more, *Grandmother* and *Mora Fair*. The latter is a picture conceived in a rather old-fashioned spirit, a moral tale in paint, with the drunken man by the wall. *Grandmother* is a remarkable product in comparison with the other Swedish rustic pictures of the time, painted with superior elegance and skill after Bastien Lepage's teaching. How much more genuine is the effect of Zorn's exposition than these others! Perhaps its secret lies just in the fact that it is not a rustic picture painted from above, one might equally well call it a family portrait, that it possesses both the genuineness of a description and the sincerity of a portrait. Its subject and arrangement point forward to the picture of *Mona* and similar subjects.

The year 1892 brings us to a period of transition in Zorn's art. His native district has captivated him more strongly than ever before, and Paris has given him all it could. The Paris pictures of this year denote a conclusion and a climax. They are the above-mentioned *Cigarette Smoker*, *Omnibus*, and the two small interiors *Réveil* and *Soir*. In *Omnibus* he concentrates once more all his great apparatus of impressionist knowledge in order, like a skilful stage-manager, to illuminate with the rapidity of lightning a swiftly passing moment of life. It is one of the masterpieces of impression, which can be classed with similar pictures by Manet and Degas. The large canvas is in Mrs. John Gardener's collection, the smaller in that of Mr. Thorsten Laurin; they are both typical of one of Zorn's re-editions of the same *motif* in order to attain greater mellowness and a more rounded effect. *Réveil* and *Soir* form two *genre* pictures of a type—*avant et après*—with the proudest ancestry in French 18th century art, from the time of the great gouache painters and engravers. But the spirit in Zorn's work is not the ornate and elegant one of Baudouin and Eisen; he is quite modern in his healthy vigour. The model creeping to bed in the yellowish-red lamplight seems, as it were, resuscitated from a story by Maupassant, and resuscitated with the utmost plasticity. In *Réveil*—



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so well known from the etching—the seductive atmosphere is volatilized, the buxom woman, stretching herself on the skilfully painted soft pillows, assumes grotesque shapes, comic in their effect, when she wakens full of the joy of life and exuberant strength as a sunbeam begins to blaze on a shimmering spot of the hand that hangs loosely down by the side of the bed.

With these works Zorn's early period comes to a close. And the year after, 1893, there arises a new external circumstance that makes it convenient to draw a line here in the chronicle of his painting. That was his first visit to America. Well equipped, with quite a personal touch as an artist, he now becomes more cosmopolitan than Parisian in his painting, but a cosmopolitan with strong roots in Mora. He becomes more and more plastic in his painting and the purely pictorial element is not so pronounced. We get colour instead of colouring; inspiration from the peasant culture of his native land seems to arise instead of the French compositions of colour; and at the same time he proceeds towards greater breadth and more robust masculinity instead of the nimble and delicate workmanship and the enamoured youthfulness, and the signs of happy discovery in relation to the *motif* that are characteristic of the early works.

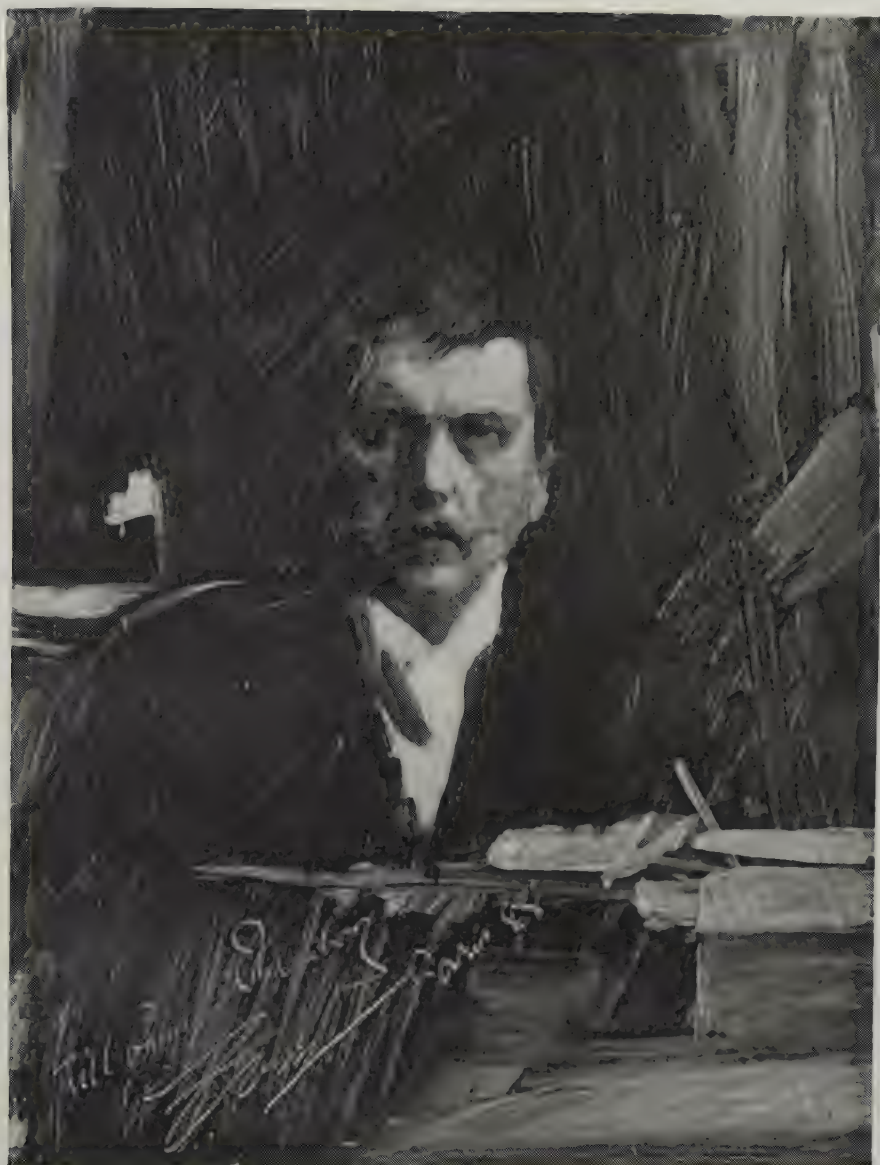






"UNE PREMIÈRE." (1833)





SELF-PORTRAIT. (1888)

















(Copyright the property of Mr. Robert Dumthorne, publisher of the large plate)

— ROWING TO CHURCH — (1889)





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"BAKING BREAD." (1889)







"INTERIOR OF A BREWERY." (1890)





"MARGIT." (1891)







"OPAL." (1891)





"SUNDAY MORNING." (1891)







"MIDNIGHT." (1891)



#### IV. LATER OIL PAINTINGS

In the preceding pages we have seen the young artist with great resources of talent and will power, in whose development one work after the other is an achievement and a discovery. By the middle of the 'nineties Zorn was recognized everywhere as a mature artist, and, what is more important for his development, he was on most points mature within himself. A new element became more and more prominent, the power of his own reputation over his production; especially during the later years he produced studies of the nude, Dalecarlian scenes and portraits in his own style, just as he himself and the public wanted, but without fresh efforts in new directions. He is now mature as far as the spiritual side of his art is concerned, and much of his production during the later years was stamped more by repetition than by actual experience. I do not mean by this that everything after the middle of the 'nineties was inferior in artistic interest to the earlier works; on the contrary, several of his greatest works were produced during this later period. But from the point of view of his development this great production can be dealt with more briefly than the output of the early years of discovery. And there is another reason for not treating of the later art, especially that of quite recent years, in more detail: we have not yet got the correct historical perspective for it. There has been a hot struggle between servile defenders and fiery attackers; but the artist himself has always remained calm and confident in the midst of it.

It was a painter at the height of his creative power who, filled with the calm certainty of victory, crossed the Atlantic for the first time in 1893 to add fresh laurels to the ones he had already gained. I must confess that with regard to the works in America I can only write from hearsay and reproductions; in but a few cases have they come to Sweden. Especially with regard to his work as a fashionable portrait painter in America I am unable to give any detailed judgment. A large number



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of these portraits belong to his friend Mr. Charles Deering, of Chicago. The fine portrait of *Mrs. Deering* sitting in evening dress in an elegant room with luxurious plants, she herself a beautiful and refined flower-like creature of luxury, seems to show an affinity with the delicate elegance of his portraits of Parisian ladies. Other portraits from this first journey to America are those of *Miss Marion Deering*, *Mr. Thomas Wheeler*, *Mr. Bond*, *Miss Hildred* and *Mrs. Potter Palmer*. The next year to this series of portraits were added those of *Miss Frida Schiff*, *Mrs. John Gardener*, *Mr. H. Ives*, *Mr. W. Ogden* and *Mrs. Scammon*.

On his return home in 1894 he painted the boldly composed portrait of *Fru Emma Zorn*, turning over the leaves of a portfolio and dressed in a strange costume of vermillion with white spots, characteristic of the period; and in 1896 two of the magnificent self-portraits. One is the half-length picture with *Mona* in the background (in Mr. E. Osterlind's possession), the other the well-known one in his painter's coat and with a model in the background, also known from the etching. In the former portrait there is a tense and enquiring look on the serious, energetic face, and the hand is ready to put the brilliant colour on the canvas. In the background the sunlight falls gently upon *Mona's* peaceful features. In the latter portrait the artist has let his palette and brush sink down on his knee and gazes out of the canvas with a tired and reflective look. But beneath the tired eyelids there is a tense look of self-criticism and energy, ready to see the deficiencies in the work and to remedy them. In the background we catch a glimpse of the soft and charming figure of the model, with the well-shaped limbs forming a counterpoise in the composition to the powerfully illuminated central figure in the foreground. It seems to me that these two self-portraits of the same year give us the entire artistic spirit of Zorn, the calm penetration of his eyes and the energy of his figure, and that the two accessory figures, somewhat different in spirit, are there as the attendant genii of his art, just as old portrait painters used to

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have a female genius of painting by their side in portraits of themselves.

It is of interest to glance at the palette on the painter's knee in the latter portrait. The row of daubs of paint seems exaggerated to the spectator because of their sparsity; there are only white, brown, black and a dab of madder red. But if one examines the technique of the picture more closely it is obvious that little more has been used; a suspicion of green is seen in the necktie. And yet the effect is both warm and rich. This is Zorn's great magic during his later period.

To these family portraits was added in 1898 the imposing one of *Mona* (Plate XVI). She enters with her white kerchief and her sheepskin coat, pure and austere like the northern winter itself, and has in her hands frozen carrots and turnips which she has brought up from the cellar. It is one of Zorn's best paintings, with its solid and noble construction and the weft of subdued red in the colouring. Here the inspiration from the rich colours of the Dalecarlian paintings becomes naturally apparent; here, as in the *Midsummer Dance* (Plate XVII), painted one year earlier, he penetrates with greater power and more profoundly into the spirit of his native place. And no one could personify this to him better than his mother. "Mona" is the old Dalecarlian word for mother. It has a fine, almost a solemn sound to a Swedish ear. In the public mind it has become attached to the figure of the aged Grudd Anna, whom Zorn painted time after time with filial reverence. He was closely attached to, and proud of this fine old Mora woman, who went about just as quietly and confidently in Zorn's house with its treasures of foreign art, as in her own little cottage, with bright, wise eyes and calm and assured accents for everything around her, sometimes with a little gleam in her eyes and her iron pipe always in her mouth. Anyone who undertook the pleasant task of describing great artists' pictures of their mothers would come across many subtle, poetic and monumental human portraits, but few inspired by such genuine affection as Zorn's picture of his old "Mona."

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Zorn's respect for his task could not have been greater even when the same year he was commissioned to paint the portraits of *Oscar II.* and *Prince Carl*. They are two official works, both more fresh and unconventional than most official portraits, and painted with powerful sweeps of the brush and a moist colour in a cool harmony, that of the King in blue and pale gold, Prince Carl in light blue and white. The latter is rightly one of the most popular modern portraits in Sweden. Before the execution of these two portraits Zorn had painted a series of elegant and confident, sometimes a little superficial, pictures of wealthy people in America, gentlemen with shining foreheads and "very correct" black coats, the above-mentioned *Mr. H. Ives* (1895); *Dr. Taussig* the next year; and the following year *Mr. E. R. Bacon*, the "Iron King," dressed in a long coat with silk facings; the other portraits do not call for special mention. The *Mrs. W. Bacon* (1897) is a fashionable portrait, strongly reminiscent of Sargent in spirit and technique. Sitting in her drawing-room in a beautiful low-necked dress, caressing her dog, she is, one presumes, a typical representative of the American lady of fashion of that period.

The portraits of two Swedish scholars, *Professors Fahlbeck* and *Quennerstedt*, painted in 1898, seem to show that Zorn retains too much of the purely external elegance and the practical energy of the American portraits to be really at his ease with the quiet, thoughtful type of face. In spite of their solid and dignified character, these portraits have not perhaps the inner spirituality that would enable them after centuries to hang in picture galleries as interesting and important evidence of the mental life of forgotten scholars, and to impart some of the charm of their personalities.

But if Zorn ever felt in his element at the easel with a model in front of him it was when in 1900 he painted the well-known portrait of *Maja von Heijne*. If the model in the background of the self-portrait previously mentioned could be called one of the genii of Zorn's painting, it has assumed a brilliant form



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in this woman in all her young, fresh glory, a powerfully built blonde with radiant eyes, healthy, pink cheeks and half-open mouth. Her face, her golden hair, and her buxom and firm arms shine forth against a dark-green background, a low-necked dress of a brighter green, and the soft furs, two fox-skins that she wears round her neck. The healthy skin shines like a precious pearl in its soft case.

From this canvas, with its glorification of healthy womanhood, let us turn for a moment to the pictures of the nude from the time of the American journey till the end of the century. The dominating picture here is the one of 1894, famous in Sweden and called simply *Naked*. A grotesquely built, coarse, fat, red-haired woman is standing in a room in bright daylight, drying herself after her bath. It is a challenge of coarse realism, but seldom has such a *motif* been so ennobled in the execution. It is as if, at the height of the power of his art, Zorn wished to let his brush really sing the eulogy of the flesh—not the same as beauty—that he had intoned in the *Venus de la Villette*. The brush flies over the canvas as gaily and inspired as if the scene was a Homeric shore and the woman a *Venus* by Rubens, instead of a coarse servant in a mean room. Bellman “ennobled” his subjects in the same way. The painting has a warm golden tone and the model shows a tremulous sensitiveness and an intense feeling for what Berenson calls “tactile value.”

By the side of this masterpiece we have a half-length figure painted at about the same time (belonging to Consul Helge Johnson), with splendid ivory flesh, the effect of which is heightened by a mellow green strip of cloth; and the little dithyramb to the bright power of summer, produced as if by magic in the heat of inspiration, the picture called *After Bathing* (the property of Mr. Thorsten Laurin), a woman dressing her child, a cascade of gold and green against a background of bright blue water, showing a fresh and more free and bold grasp of the early *motif* of 1888 (*Woman dressing her child beneath the alders*). The subject *Reflections* (1889) is



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repeated in a heavier form and a deeper scheme of colour in *Frileuse* (Prince Eugen's collection). The following year Zorn takes once more the old *motif* from the water-colour called *Une première*, which he considered he had not properly solved before. In a mellow golden tone and with broad strokes he translates the delicate yellow and soft grey of the water-colour and the earlier painting, but it is doubtful whether he has surpassed the inspired interpretation of the former.

The old *genre* pictures of the life of a big town, whose difficult problems of movement and light it was his ambition to tackle during his stay in Paris, were only resumed now with a single work, in a larger and simpler form and more powerful colouring. This is the famous *Night Effect* (1895) depicting a Paris coquette, in a fiery red dress, sailing out on to the boulevard from the empty rows of chairs of the café, her movements being captured in an inimitable way. It is a work of genius as a technical portrayal of movement and also in the conception of the *motif*, seen in the magic flashlight of the moment, and with a wonderfully clear note of the emptiness and coldness that its magic has in store for one who has been fascinated.

It is another sphere that now draws Zorn, the *genre* painter, with the strength of its memories and its affinity; it is from Mora that he now hears more and more strongly "the call of the wild," if one can use this expression of the old peasant culture. And the following year a night effect gets a definite interpretation of far greater reach and depth than the Paris intermezzo; this is in the *Midsummer Dance* at his own Mora (Plate XVII), the most national of all Swedish subjects. It is in the bright twilight, when the glow of the sunset and that of the dawn stretch out their hands to each other. Against a sky of pale citron yellow stands out the dark maypole, with the wreaths of leaves and the crossed arrows, the arms of Dalecarlia, a characteristic silhouette. The air is full of a mild golden light from the sunset, it streams in over the figures, is reflected in the windows, fills the red cottage wall with a glowing red

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colour, draws a sharp outline of light round the profiles of the dancing couples and the swinging skirts of the Dalecarlian girls. From the mysterious darkness in the doorway of the grey cottage streams forth the music from the peasant-fiddler's violin. One almost seems to hear the shrill, half melancholy, and monotonous sound of an old dance melody. The couples turn in a heavy, lumbering rhythm, serious and silent as Swedish peasants almost always are at such festivals before the effects of the brandy have made themselves felt and the fights and noise begin. That the Swedes are a heavy nation, full of fieriness, is a well-known statement of a classical Swedish writer. We do not get the wild joy of the Flemish *Kermis* as seen in Brueghel's and Rubens' pictures. It is difficult for joy to find an outlet and rise in the great silence; one feels that there are silent woods for miles around, and silent working days before and after the short nights of festival. *Midsummer Dance* is one of the works of art that has gone deepest into the heart of Swedish peasant life.

Zorn got the inspiration for this picture one midsummer night at the maypole at Mora, and there still exists a rapid and direct sketch made during the first overwhelming impression. Only the colour scheme, the distribution of the figures, and the movement are indicated here. All the abundance of figures, the whole orchestration of the tones of colour, and the rhythm of the lines represent a long, cherished and successful task. This picture came as a great revelation in Zorn's art and certainly forms its centre of gravity. It denotes the introduction to the subsequent pictures of Dalecarlian life of later years, more mellow and with more powerful colouring than the bright and delicate paintings of his youth.

In 1898 we get a typical Dalecarlian picture *The Loft-stairs*, with the girl in her gorgeous dress and her fine heavy boots descending the grey darkness of the stairs; and in 1902 came the buxom *Braskkulla*, but we have to wait until 1904 and 1905 before the centre of gravity of Zorn's work is changed.

During the first few years of the present century there was

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undoubtedly a halt in Zorn's art, in spite of some notable works and a zealous production, especially of portraits in America. It seems as if his artistic power had been divided and he had taxed his powers with the masterpieces of the years just described. During 1900 he was working at Mora, in Paris, Berlin and Chicago; the following year was spent largely in portrait painting in America, its productions being known to us partly by etchings. I give here a series of names according to the catalogue of Zorn's works made by Mr. Thorsten Laurin : *Mr. Grant Schley, Colonel Lamont and Mrs. Lamont, Mr. C. Deering, Mr. and Mrs. I. De Ver Warner, Mr. Charles Nagel, Mr. Robert de Forest, Mr. Catlin, and Mrs. Cotton.*

The same year, however, there appeared in New York one of Zorn's most discussed paintings of the nude, *A Dream* (Thiel's collection), a round-limbed young lady asleep naked and rosy in a white bed, and turning a very attractive back to the on-looker. The notorious Berlin police authorities of the time confiscated reproductions of this picture published as post-cards, arousing a chorus of indignant protest from artistic quarters.

During these years of somewhat undecided work the Dalecarlian *motifs* were increased by such splendid representatives as *Gäslkall*, a picture of a Dalecarlian girl knitting, painted in subdued green and red (belonging to Consul Hj. Wikander); the half-length picture of *Kufver-Maja* in a white fur, a sketch full of animal spirits revealing the joy of painting, very popular in reproductions (Prince Eugen's collection); and the solid *Braskkulla*, the apotheosis of flesh and health, painted in green and red (in the National Museum, Stockholm). But there is one work from these years that stands out above all the others : that is the portrait of *Emma Zorn* in a red dress and cap, with the little shaggy dog "Mouche" on her lap. This painting, with its predominating strong red that does not produce a raw and sharp effect in the colour-scheme, is a masterpiece worthy of a Venetian of the 16th century. And



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the little tuft of hair on the dog, produced with a few flicks of the brush, is a bit of painting worthy of any virtuoso. The picture also gives beautiful and noble expression to the wise and refined character of his model.

The more modern portrait painting was continued during 1903 with the energetically drawn portraits of *Knut Wallenberg* and *Mrs. Marcus Wallenberg*, whose ivory white arms against her gleaming dress of deep black produce a noble colour effect, often recurring or attempted in the portraits of the later years. The portrait of *Professor Simon Bolthius, senior*, is a counterpart to the earlier portraits of professors previously mentioned. The somewhat meagre and divided impression produced by the work of these years ought not, however, to be taken as indicating any exhaustion in Zorn's creative power. His main interest was concentrated at this time on another field, the statue of Gustav Vasa (Plate LXIII) that was erected at Mora in 1903.

This intermediate period ends in 1903-4 with a new harvest of portraits from America, represented by that of *Mr. James Deering*, interesting in comparison with the similarly designed *Coquelin* portrait. A mere comparison of the two works gives one a sad feeling that the artist has lost some of the radiant enthusiasm of the victorious year of 1889. The other American portraits from this journey are those of *Mr. Charles W. Deering*, *Mr. Charles T. Barney*, *Mr. Hilt*, the Member of Congress, *Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Crane*, *Mr. Richard Howe*, *Mr. Dawes*, *Senator Mark Hannah*, *Mr. Broolings* and a sketch of a *Miss Grigsby* lying convalescent on a couch.

The year 1904 marks once more a revival in Zorn's art. There now appear, one after the other, three kindred masterpieces in the series of old Dalecarlian peasant types, that may be said to have been started with the portrait of *Mona*. People in Dalecarlia grow old like the pine-trees. They become more grey and mossy and bald, but the sound timber seems to remain, and the calm cheerfulness and tenacious strength that flow out towards the poor town-dweller when he meets them up



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in their hills is like a refreshing and wholesome draught. The three representatives of this race from the year 1904 are *Djos Mats*, the watchmaker (Plate XIX), *Bosl Anders*, the smith, and *Hins Anders*, the fiddler (Plate XVIII). *Djos Mats* is looking up from his work with a keen and bright glance over his spectacles. From the very earliest times the Mora men have been known in Sweden for their skill in watchmaking. The colouring is soft and subdued, and a mild light from the snow is coming through the window. His counterpart in *Bosl Anders*, the master-smith, is a Dalecarlian who, according to reliable statements, constructed as early as in 1840 a steam locomotive that went on the floor of his own cottage. If my idea of Zorn's character is correct, he approached this man with more respect than many an international notability. The third in this series is old *Hins Anders*, the fiddler, with his dry little smiling face and aquiline nose, bent over his violin; he is dressed in the white and shining sheepskin fur which Zorn's ambition to paint materials often caused him to reproduce. This subject is very well known by the etching.

To these fine old men were added in 1907 *The Master Smith*, lumbering and looking like an old wizard, with his tongs and a glowing iron bar in his hand in the darkness of his cottage; and another of Mora's most monumental craftsmen, *Grudd Anders* himself, tall and masterful in his Mora costume of white, black and green, a man who certainly considered as his greatest claim to fame that he was the most skilful and the best known of them all with knife or etching needle or brush. And Zorn had so high an opinion of the famous skill of the people in his native place that I believe that this paradox does not imply anything that he himself, the spoilt cosmopolitan, did not really feel in his heart.

The portraits of the latest years owe their character largely to the fact that at that time it was considered fine, and cost a great deal of money, to be painted by Zorn, and that the types that in this way passed through the artist's studio, alternating with the nude models, were often of no great interest to him.

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There were, of course, exceptions. The portraits of men, of which more will be said later on, show us as a rule well-barbered financiers, in morning or evening dress, their clothes always irreproachably painted with some long sweeping strokes of the brush, as in the old *Coquelin* portrait of '89, to which he continually returns. Chairs of shining buffalo leather, patent leather boots, gleaming silk facings, snowy-white shirt-fronts, these are what one remembers most of these portraits; just as in the feminine portraits the luxurious outer elegance becomes more and more the predominating interest, here, however, fraternally shared with the interest for the figures that are always made as visible as possible.

As good specimens of these portraits I might mention, among the male portraits, that of *Knut Wallenberg* (1903), *Mr. William Olsson* (1906), *Sir Ernest Cassel* (1907), *Consul Westrup* (1909), *Mr. Marcus Wallenberg* (1914), *Mr. Erik Frisell*, but it is unnecessary to give the names of many of these later portraits here.

Among the portraits of ladies appear those of *Fru Joseph Sachs* (1911), *Fru Strokirk* and, from the latest years, *Fröken Amelie Coyet* (a nobly conceived work but somewhat lacking in colour), and *Fru Sigrid Carlsund*. The latter is one of Zorn's most vivid portraits of his later years. Before this lady in walking dress, with her bright and keen glance and with her shining leather bag on her knee, we get the impression that she has just sat down for a moment to exchange some amusing and friendly repartee with the onlooker before flying away to pressing duties. There is a breath of stimulating life about this portrait, which really seems to have been painted *con amore*. But then the model is the lady who, during Zorn's later years, was the chief means of wisely and energetically bringing about the lively and productive contact between Zorn the etcher and his public. Among the many society portraits of the last years we observe only too often how little interest the artist had in his work, and how glad he was for his virtuosity in introducing a brilliant light on a cheek, or a silk

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stocking, to help him to skip over the interpretation of people to whom he was heartily indifferent. His very last work, the portrait of *Mrs. Wallenberg*, painted in 1920 (Plate XXX), is typical of this group of portraits. One other of the portraits of the later years seems, however, of greater interest, both as a painting and as a portrayal of a personality. This is the rendering of his friend *Bruno Liljefors* (1906), the famous animal painter. He is seen out of doors in a winter landscape, and against a background of snow-laden fir he is standing in grey sports clothes, calm, grim and serious, like an old stag. This fresh picture is painted almost entirely in grey, with a touch of cold mellow green, and the weather-beaten ruddiness of the complexion is an exhilarating addition of colour. The picture has a strong touch of the northern winter, admirably suited to the portrait of a hunter and a lover of the open-air. The same breath of the northern winter hovers over Zorn's last portrait of importance, the *Portrait of the artist in a fur coat* (Plate XXVIII). It was painted in 1915, the same year as another self-portrait in a reddish-brown jacket, envisaged with almost brutal palpability, a real record in attaining tactile value. In the portrait in the wolf-skin fur Zorn has a stiffly monumental bearing. Like a prince of the Renaissance in a Tintoretto portrait, gazing over the collar of his fur coat, Zorn sends forth here a calm and superior look from his heavy eyes over his magnificently painted wolf-skin fur. The portrait, with its keen insight and the happy freshness of its execution, gives an adequate picture of the artist prince that Zorn was at home here during his later years.

At Zorn's latest exhibitions in Stockholm the public became accustomed to an exceedingly bewildering juxtaposition, pictures of ladies and gentlemen in irreproachable society dress mingled with nude models of the most striking realism. If the former category were painted to satisfy the desire of plutocracy to be immortalized by our greatest and most expensive artist, the painting of the latter certainly became in the course of time the artist's most cherished occupation. He is



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said to have explained that sometimes he wished to paint some "subject"—of course with a nude model—but when he saw how beautiful it was when the model let the last garment fall, he banished all such thoughts and merely painted—the model. Thus during the last twenty years he produced a great number of paintings from the nude, in which one well-shaped sitter after the other, from his native region in Dalarne, from the usual *milieu* of models, or from higher social circles, passed through his studio and were immortalized freshly and informally in a bright white light, against the background of his beautiful fifteenth-century tapestry ("*The Unicorn*"), crouching in the soft white bearskin ("*The Captive*"), or on the modern heavy, gleaming blue leather sofa, sitting or standing by the bath of speckled marble in the studio flat—several pictures with a bright, fresh tone and a mild light playing on them—or as in the artist's last picture, sitting on a chair eagerly occupied reading press cuttings containing critiques of the latest exhibition. It is quite natural that the model is interested in these cuttings, for she is the genius of Zorn's painting during his last years, when it was the song of praise to the flesh that his brush preferred, with varying inspiration but often from mere routine. And it cannot be denied that, towards the end, this worship of the female form in his paintings often became brutal and indiscreet; a collection of a large number of them would really become a sort of exact atlas of racial biology. I shall only mention a couple of these pictures because they are of greater interest from an artistic point of view. *Getting Up* (1916) shows a fine study in values, and *Renaissance* (1917) a powerfully built woman who has fallen asleep leaning back in her chair, her glass having fallen from her loosely hanging hand on to the floor. It is executed with soft and delicate nuances, resembling in the finesse of its construction Zorn's painting of the 'nineties. But I admit that it is not suitable for a large public museum or an illustration.

If one were to mention a perfect example to show the strongly



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plastic character of his later model-painting it would be the *Monna Vanna*, a slender, well-shaped model, painted with a plasticity that reminds us directly of Zorn's greatness as a naturalistic sculptor.

When we mentioned the nude model in the background of Zorn's portrait of himself as his artistic genius, we might have said that during his later years she literally followed him everywhere, from the studio out on his yachting cruises, when, in varying types, she poses by the water or lies at full length on the rock or the sandy shore, quite conscious that she is being observed. There is a decided difference between these and the earlier paintings of the nude belonging to the same category. These were women taken by surprise in full enjoyment of their bathe, the sun, and their own radiant and youthful health; here the model is consciously posing from custom. I shall only briefly mention some of the best known. In 1901 he painted *On the Rock*, a model with red hair fluttering in the wind. From 1904 we have one of the finest pictures in this group, *By Lake Siljan*, in the National Museum, Stockholm. Among the leaves, gleaming like silver, of the fluffy willows a beautiful young girl with pale golden skin stands smiling at the sun. And in the background is interposed a strip of bright blue water, giving a touch of freshness to this beautiful picture. In 1907 we get *Edö*, well known from the etching. In 1908 we have *The Hinds*, the slender and supple girls peeping out in the verdure, ready to dart gracefully away among the green bushes, a painting of great charm. As the years pass these *motifs* become more and more numerous and in the end one can scarcely avoid applying the word "manufacture" to them. The most distant Skerries of the Stockholm archipelago became the favourite place for these subjects. In 1909 and the subsequent years until Zorn's death long series of fairly similar pictures were painted at Sandhamn.

The climax of these is the picture reproduced here with the title of *Dagmar*, 1911 (Plate XXV). The arrangement strikes

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us as being a familiar one for centuries back, but how modern and thoroughly characteristic of Zorn is the unconventional view of the subject. The round-limbed little figure crouching by the water, with her cool rosy colouring, melts beautifully into the landscape. She is the personification of quiet and healthy nature, a Northern and rustic Musidora, to suggest a familiar point of contact with the great English art of the 18th century. In *The Ford* and *The Brook* her sisters wade lightly and cautiously through the shallow water that coils transparently over the stones. In *Frightened* (1912) they run away in a flock, like nymphs before Pan.

Many of the nude studies of these years show an almost deterrent abundance of robust health and giant limbs, and the sculptural roundness that Zorn strove for more and more, sometimes appears during his later period with an almost statue-like palpability. We get smoothly polished bodies, types from a biological treatise, placed in their *milieu*. On a few happy occasions during his very last years the artist got a softer, more delicate colouring into these pictures, as in the beautiful example called *The Skiff* (1919).

We shall glance for a moment at the landscapes. These are generally of very secondary importance in these pictures, often even becoming mere side-scenes, cut out to a pattern, for the figures, in which alone the artist is interested. And when he sometimes paints pure landscape or only puts in a few minor figures, his art, as a rule, is on a lower plane than his performances in the spheres that interest him most. His skill in brushwork does not fail, but it is a strangely empty and bare conception of Nature. One seldom perceives any deep emotion aroused by the remarkable contours of the ridges in the Dalecarlian woods, or any intimate and fruitful worship of the verdure, the hills and the brooks. The artist's attention has been captured far too strongly by women of flesh and blood for him to listen to the dryads and the nymphs. The brilliant promise of a great landscape painter, suggested by the sketches and some large canvases of about 1890, was not

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realized, and when gazing upon his not uncommon pictures of the verdure of young woods, with luxuriant pines and willows, one has the feeling that the scene is for a moment empty. A few landscapes are, however, worthy of mention, *Sunlight in the Wood* and *Fugitive*; and, last and best, the ponderous and powerful picture of the slowly eddying *Dal River* by his cottage at Gopsmor, with the Gopsberg in the background, a picture with a heavy, melancholy atmosphere, a splendid symbol of Northern Sweden.

As we have seen, the painter of *Midsummer Dance* was attracted more and more strongly, as the years went by, to the scenery and the life of his native district, and the primitive Gopsmor became to him the spot on the earth with which he, the virtuoso and man of fashion, felt the deepest affinity. But his description of the Dalecarlian peasant is often accompanied by his interest for the nude; in most cases the *motifs* are women bathing inside the cottages, or young girls getting up or dressing themselves.

To the Dalecarlian subjects of the last years (after 1905) apart from the studies in the nude, what is more generally called in the usual sense pictures from peasant life, belongs the fine study of a family gathered together round the fireplace while a Dalecarlian lass is singing to the guitar—*Musique en famille* (1905)—while the light from the doorway breaks in against the firelight as in his earlier Dalecarlian interiors. The composition is very well known as an etching. The same year saw *Kings Kari*, a fresh composition glittering with the joy of colour and good humour—a red-cheeked lass with a red check kerchief—the fine *Horn-blower*, a green landscape with a sturdy old Dalecarlian woman calling the cattle with a horn, an original and imposing picture. The next year gives us the skilful picture of the dance in the Gopsmor cottage, *Polka*, or *Dance at Gopsmor*, with its uniformly grey dusk in the cottage, a notable counterpart to *Midsummer Dance*, though not so rich nor so profound. This *motif* was repeated in a broader and stronger form during the winter of 1912 in a painting



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called *Gopsmor Cottage*. These two compositions are also well known as etchings.

In the popular painting *Early Christmas Service* (1908) he has seized a *motif* with a very special atmosphere. In the frosty blue dawn the church-goers, in their sheep-skin furs, are leaving. From within, where the candles are twinkling and the concluding hymn is pealing forth from the organ loft, there falls a beautiful reddish-yellow light, breaking against the receding darkness of the night. The painting has something deeply national in it, striking a chord of feeling that for most Swedes has probably been in oblivion since the early years of childhood.

We get a glimpse of life in the mountain farms in some pictures painted at Gopsmor, *Vallkulla* or *Sunday morning* (Plate XXVII) in which a girl is sitting still and idle on the threshold of the grey mountain farmhouse, a green and sunny summer Sunday reflected in her eyes. We see the same silent and splendid young peasant girl at her everyday duties in *Watering the Horses* (Plate XXII), where she is fetching water by the imposing old wall made of logs, or *Carrying Wood* (1914), or in a fine little study sitting by the window and gazing steadily out through its small leaded panes, or posing red-cheeked and dashing in her Sunday finery.

But the artist prefers to take us with indiscreet brush to more intimate situations and we are allowed to see her stretching herself, still *Drowsy*, in the old-fashioned wooden chair; or two splendidly fresh young specimens of the family take an *Improvised bath* (Plate XX) in a tub on the floor of the cottage while the firelight falls on the ample forms of their white bodies. On such subjects Zorn's brush is carried along with irresistible inspiration. In *Mother and Daughter* (Plate XXIII) we get the favourite theme of the painter, the play of warm and cold light on female forms. How warmly the flickering firelight caresses the two bodies, the curious pig-like flesh of the solid old mother, and the chastely delicate and



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supple figure of the daughter in the background. The aged painter seems in this picture to have had for a moment the same fresh and conquering view of his subject as when at the age of thirty he gave us his most inspired paintings from the nude.

During the following years his *motifs* became more and more coarse in form and the colour effects more and more crude. The two pictures of naked girls painted in 1914, *Berserk* and *Red Stocking*, are rustic kinswomen of the plumpiest of Jordaen's nymphs. The artist oscillates between this primitive worship of heavy forms and elegant painting of young well-shaped girlish bodies, the latter best represented by the well-known canvas *I believe I was fourteen years old*. The subjects of the same sort of his very last years which were shown at the Zorn and Liljefors exhibition in 1920 gave one a strong impression that his sense of colour, once so fine, had been exhausted. In one of the best, *The Flea* (1918), a girl sitting naked and investigating the sheepskin covering on her bed, the tone is grey, ashen, without the fine shimmer that a quarter of a century earlier he was able to spread over similar *motifs*, and when he lets the colours play freely and strongly they become towards the last tawdry and crude. This is the case, for instance, in the National Museum painting that represents his last phase, *A Breath of Home* (1920), a girl in Dalecarlian dress singing to the lute.

His production in the 20th century was far greater than appears from these short notes. The brevity of this account may be excused partly by the monotony that came over Zorn's work as the years passed by, partly by the writer's feeling that it is impossible to find so much interest in these last works as in the earlier ones, although on their appearance they were so uncritically admired and dearly paid for. I am convinced that in the future there will be in many respects a revaluation of Zorn's art; until this has occurred it will be wiser to admit honestly what seems to us the decline of his last years, however much one would have liked before a

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foreign public to point to a great Swedish artist whose power of spiritual growth had remained unabated even in his latest years.

Among Zorn's artist friends there have been voices that have tried to maintain that the pictures produced during his last years indicated new and great conquests and a deeper insight into the problems of painting. Unfortunately I am unable to agree. These opinions seem to have a tone that is suspiciously like flattery, and we are surely doing better service to the reputation of so great an artist if we accept gratefully what is pleasing to the heart and eye, and refrain from flattery when we come across banal repetition and a coarsened conception of form and colour.





"MONA"—THE ARTIST'S MOTHER. (1898)







" MIDSUMMER DANCE." (1897)





"THE VILLAGE VIOLINIST—HINS ANDERS." (1904)







“ DJOS MATS, CLOCKMAKER AT MORA.” (1905)





"AN IMPROVED BATH." (1906)







" AT THE WINDOW." (1908)





"WATERING THE HORSES." (1908)







" MOTHER AND DAUGHTER." (1909)











"DAGMAR." (1911)





" SKERIKULLA." (1911)

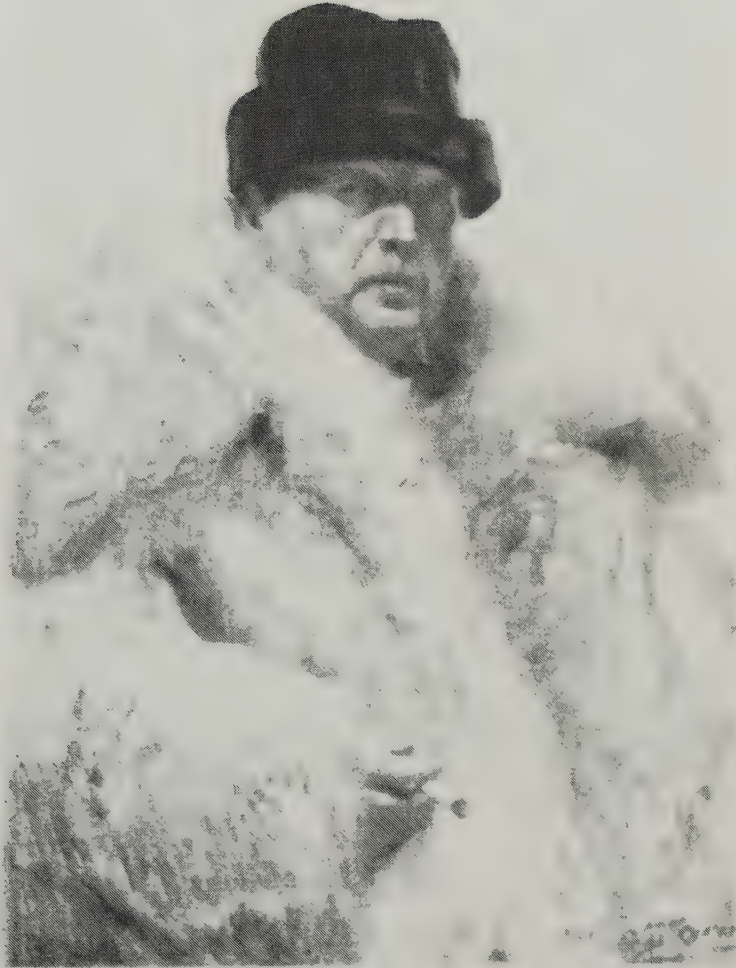






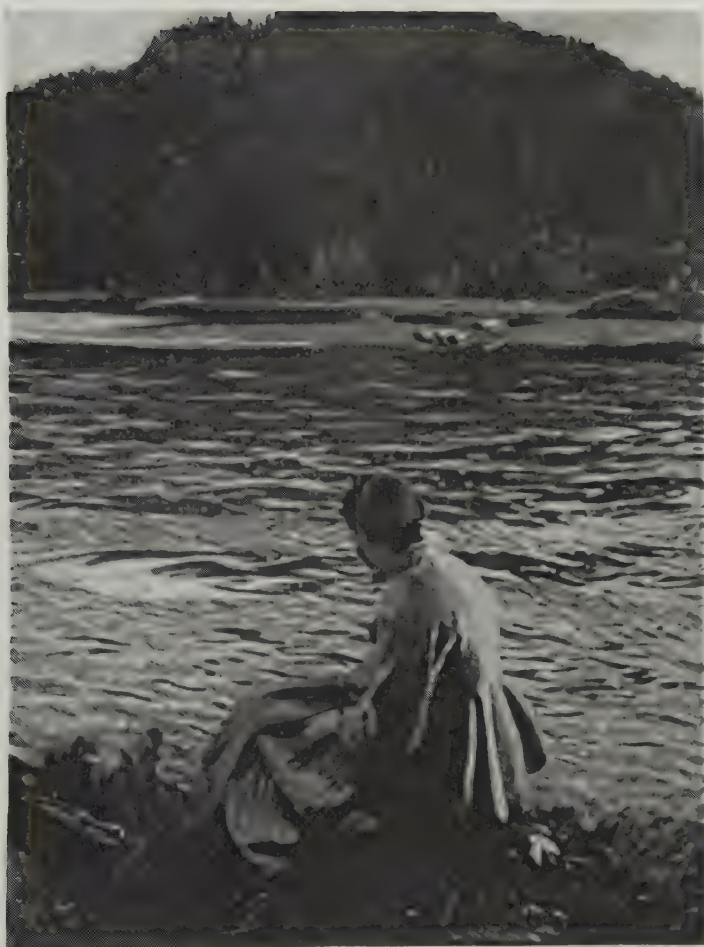
"VALKULLA." (1912)











"GOPSBERGET." (1915)





"MRS. WALLENBERG." (1920)





## V. ETCHINGS\*

When Zorn was working in London in 1882 it was natural that the young Swedish artist should visit his fellow-countryman who was then best known in England, Axel Herman Haig, the etcher, who had already achieved a certain success. This meeting was to be of importance for Zorn. Haig immediately appreciated his dazzling gifts and became his instructor in the art of etching. In 1882 Zorn executed his first plate, a portrait of Haig, and this marks the beginning of his triumphal progress as an etcher, which is familiar to everyone interested in this branch of art.

Swedish graphic art at the period of this memorable event forms a dark background to Zorn's own brilliant contribution. Copper engraving and lithography had by this time lost their importance as means of artistic expression. We had really one etcher of importance, Georg von Rosen, who had, however, devoted only a small portion of his creative power to his historical etched glass of the 'sixties and 'seventies. In the spring of 1875 original etching began for the first time to be regarded with interest by leading artists in Sweden. It was then that the Belgian artist, L. Lowenstam, opened his school of etching in Stockholm and some well-known artists began to practise the art, either directly as his pupils, or under the influence of the newly aroused interest for this branch of art. The painters of *paysage intime* were most typical of this period. But the pupil of Lowenstam who was to have the most brilliant future was Carl Larsson, well known later as one of the few Swedes, after Zorn, who were successful in achieving some reputation as etchers.

But it was only the technique of etching that Zorn had to learn from Haig. The most thorough investigation would not produce any evidence of profound artistic connection between the styles of the two artists. Haig is, as we know, an architectural etcher trained in the English school, with his dry little *gran-*

\* cf. K. Asplund's ZORN'S ENGRAVED WORK, (Bukowski, Stockholm, 1920-21). The present chapter is based on the Introduction in this volume.

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*dezza* in composition and his minute technique in execution. Zorn already had the range of his subjects defined—as we have seen in the chapter on his water-colour painting—and his etchings fall into the same sphere. From the very beginning he was far in advance of his instructor in artistic will power and in the brilliance of his results.

The first period of Zorn's activity as an etcher was between 1882 and 1889. The memories of his journeys in England, Spain and Turkey appear to us in his etchings, generally reproduced from water-colours. But even now, in these not very numerous plates, there are mingled the two cycles of subjects that will always constitute the main features of Zorn's etchings as well as his paintings, namely portraiture and the nude. The style of these early plates is a detailed finesse; it is the attempt of the earnest realist, conscious of his goal, and the conscientious technician to come to grips with the details of reality before passing to the broad and bold simplification that is able, as if by magic, to capture light and motion, and to fill the figures with life in a marvellous way. In the pictures of these years of development there is a vernal and stimulating touch of the young artist's joy of discovery; they form a delightful early renaissance in Zorn's etching. His intentions at that time are perhaps shown most finely in his inspired pictures of women, the gracious and caressing forms in *The Cousins*, the tenderly but firmly drawn head in *Mary*, and the warm sensuousness of such a vision as *Rêve d'Amour*.

The year 1889 is noteworthy in the history of Zorn's etching. It was then that he executed his first self-portrait. From the darkness of his study the artist turns towards the mirror his face, with its keen look of enquiry, and the light falls on the broad brow, a modern equivalent of Rembrandt's portrait of himself. Here he has for the first time solved a problem of light and shade in etching. One notices at once that he has arrived at something new in technique. There is no longer thin and delicate drawing, but a pictorial breadth, no accented contour lines, but dark surfaces placed against light

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ones as in an oil painting. We see here the famous parallel line-masses, the technique that later became the most marked characteristic in his plates, and here he joins the band of the impressionists as an etcher. The mere disintegration of the contour is not a unique phenomenon in the etching of the period, but the method is quite original. To explain it we must look at the artist's own domain; we have to remember that he had just previously begun to paint in oil and that his first great successful painting, *Fisherman of St. Ives*, had been produced at about the turn of the year 1887-8. The new technique of the etchings corresponds to the broad, flowing brushwork of the oil painting, while that of the earlier plates has more in common with the light and sketchy strokes of the water-colours. In the successive masterpieces of the same year, *Antonin Proust*, *Rosita Mauri* and *Une première*, Zorn's own style suddenly grows to perfection, already varying in different nuances to suit the needs of the subject. How elegant and delicate is the play of the lines on the picture of the French aesthete and politician, what a glittering festive light it produces on the form of Rosita Mauri, the dancer, and how it causes the waves and the bodies of the bathers to move in the atmosphere in *Une première*!

If in these notable plates Zorn has introduced into his etching the study of values from his oil painting, in *The big Brewery*, after the oil painting of 1890 reproduced here (Plate XI), he has for the first time solved with the needle one of the more complicated problems of interior lighting over which, in so many of his famous paintings, his brush has such sovereign mastery. The *motif* is taken from a well-known brewery in Stockholm. Indicated without contour lines, by the play of more powerful and lighter lines, the faces of the Dalecarlian girls at their task of labelling stand out in a row in the dusk. In the next great etching of an interior from the same year, *Zorn and his Wife*, he added to the skilful treatment of the light in the room a monumental wealth of composition that is rare among his etchings. The composition is firmly built up



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of light parts appearing from the darkness, the lampshade spreading the lights through the room, the powerful head of the etcher, with the searching gaze towards the mirror, the hand and the white sheet of paper. But in the vague play of light and shade one's glance is irresistibly drawn to the shining little etching needle, raised in contemplation and ready to make some swift and sure strokes on the plate.

The next year shows two attempts to solve new problems of interior light—the portrait of *Faure* singing in the twilight, and the fine *Valse* (Plate XXXIV), based on the effective contrast between the dusk of the foreground and the dazzling sea of light in the ballroom in the background. Here another of his great artistic interests has also become prominent, the portrayal of movement, which he shows us time after time in such work as *The Storm* (Plate XXXI), *Effet de Nuit*, and the two versions of *Dance at Gopsmor*.

The study of *plein-air* motives is continued in the little impromptu *In the Open Air* and in *Fisherman of St. Ives*, the latter a captivating study, especially when one has the good fortune to find a well-made impression with a blond and airy tone; and after this there is a continuation in very varying tones in *La grande baigneuse*, *My model and my boat*, *Sunset*, and in the numerous open air nude studies of the later years.

The portrait of Antonin Proust has a feminine equivalent in the elegant etching of *Madame Armand Dayot*, the witty and fashionable *Parisienne*, and then the portrait etchings begin to come more and more until they occupy a central position in Zorn's productions. In 1891 we have the exuberant little plates of *Madame Georges May*. One can observe how the sequence of the two pictures, as given by the artist himself, shows how in working the material up again he had striven after a more powerful abundance in the form and a more robust and ample treatment of the whole. The same condition can be observed in the different versions of *Madame Simon* (Plate XXXII) and *Effet de Nuit*, and is typical of Zorn's innermost strivings as an artist, from the direct impres-

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sion of a reality to a consciously more mellow, stronger and broader conception of the subject.

These years, from 1889 to 1891, may be truly called the period of the great discoveries in Zorn's art. The wings of artistic victory beat with their stimulating murmur over these products of a young mastery that was afterwards to persist throughout the years. Turning over the pages of a chronological sequence of the etchings one gets a curious impression of unevenness; masterpieces that would hold their place among the greatest triumphs of this art alternate with insignificant impromptus. There is certainly some truth in Zorn's own statement that etching was often his recreation in leisure moments, but his artistic temperament is such that even what is generally considered as recreation becomes strongly and consciously creative. Thus from the series of his etchings there arises one impressive creation after the other. Now that we have followed his development to the accomplished style we need only linger at the important milestones.

The portrait of *Ernest Renan* (Plate XL) is one of the greatest tests of Zorn's strength as an etcher. In it, according to those closely associated with the model, he has produced a strikingly characteristic picture of this aged, tired, but spiritually transcendent personality after only three exceedingly short visits to him. It is characteristic of a large number of Zorn's portraits that they are produced so entirely by the genius of his vision, which grasps the essentials in a familiar model, just as well as in one whose nature was unknown, without needing a slow deepening of the personal intercourse with the model. Before the best portraits of the 'nineties we have a strong feeling of this conception, in the strictest sense impressionistic, which, as a matter of fact, characterized the dominating view of art during the whole of the 'eighties and 'nineties. The model has been seized in a characteristic but unguarded gesture; he is not posing, he is living. It is no arranged portrait, but a piece of everyday life that has been preserved on the plate. This is especially true of the well-

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known *Toast at Idun*, where the learned librarian, Harald Wieselgren, accompanies, with his whisky glass and cigar, what is certainly a very witty speech; or of the portrait of *Henry Marquand*, in which this genius of capitalism is stepping forward from the darkness where his valuable art treasures cover the wall.

This impressionistic feature is very prominent in portraits of artists. *Augustus Saint Gaudens*, in his shirt sleeves, is resting from his work with the model crouching in the background, just as Zorn himself in *Portrait of the artist and his model* for a moment lets the brush and palette drop during his work; while *Carl Larsson* is just engaged in happy and intense work on his etching plate.

It was natural that the portraits of persons with whom the artist was not so familiar were more posing, less impressionistically vivid. This is true of *Oscar II* (Plate XXXIII), *Princess Ingeborg*, and the series of American financiers and ladies, *Loeb*, *Bacon*, *Mr. and Mrs. Grover Cleveland*, *Lamont*, *Billy Mason*, *Miss Henop*, *Miss Lurman*, *Mrs. Thompson Seton*, etc. Of these, that of *Billy Mason* must be mentioned as an extraordinarily graphic work in which a masterly use is made of the resources of the technique of etching in causing a beautiful play of black and white on the plate. From the early years of the 'nineties we have a series of female portraits in which the artist's interest for the psychological is always combined with his ever predominant interest, the feminine. Zorn was always a feminist, and some of his best etchings, as well as his paintings, are realistic songs of praise to woman.

This is the case with *The Cigarette* and *An Irish Girl*. The former is a playful impromptu, executed with great grace and certainty, a small picture, radiant with fresh young beauty seized with a few brisk and inspired strokes. The latter is a larger and more profound portrayal of a woman. With the outline quite dark against a white curtain her head stands out with its mass of black hair and the large passionate eyes; it is



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modelled with only a few strong high lights over the cheek, nose and mouth, a masterpiece whose graphic idea—the dark figure against the light—is adopted in the portrait of *Fru Emma Zorn* reading a newspaper (1900) and in *Betty Nansen*. After the monumental work *My model and my boat*, the studies of the nude become more and more frequent and are variations of the same *motif*—the young, healthy and more or less buxom female form. In *Guitar* and *Souvenir* we have a softly moulded figure in a strong sidelight; the *motif* is repeated in the quite different *Guitar-player*, with its light and minute drawing. *Sunset*, with the buxom woman whose back is turned on the spectator, as she cautiously steps across the stones, presents, like the preceding plate, an exquisite open air study; here the mild tone of the darkening air has been seized and transferred to the plate in a masterly manner, in the shining surface of the water and the dark cliff.

During the visits to America in 1901 and 1903 Zorn etched—alternately with society ladies—nude models; the most important of these works are *Before the stove* and the pictorially effective *A dark corner*.

But among the etchings that are well known to collectors all over the world, there are a whole series with *motifs* from a sphere that is rather strictly Swedish. These are the pictures of the life of the people from Dalecarlia and the studies of the nude from these and from the islands outside Stockholm, where, during the later years of his life, Zorn made a yachting trip each year. The general appreciation gained by these subjects outside the boundaries of Sweden, in spite of their realism, must be ascribed to the strong and true human feeling with which they are conceived. It is in 1906 that these *motifs* begin to predominate in Zorn's graphic work. Long before this he had sporadically adopted such subjects in his paintings, or had made original etchings of them, the former being the case in *Sunday Morning*, the latter in the two etchings *Pers Mats* and *Old Ballad*, etc. From 1900 we have the magnificent etching *Mother*, or *Madonna*, as it is called to in-



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dicating the solemn earnestness with which the feeling of the mother for her child is expressed, although it is only everyday life that has inspired the picture (Plate XXXV). The composition is one of the most majestically simple of the long series of paintings and etchings with which Zorn has done honour to the people in the part of the country to which he was so strongly attached, and during the later years of his life more and more strongly attracted. From 1903 there are the Dalecarlian interiors, *The new Ballad* and *The Storehouse*, and in 1904 *The Village Violinist*, an etching that is imposing in spite of its smallness. But it is really in 1906, as we have mentioned, that the scenes from Dalecarlia appear more and more frequently. It was then that, on the farm of Gopsmor referred to in the biographical chapter, a whole series of these were executed. *The Dance at Gopsmor*, with its strong emphasis on the darkness in the cottage, shows the couples whirling round to the notes of the old fiddler's violin, as he sits alone in the light by the shutter; in *Musique en famille*, a composition with a similar arrangement of lights, his part is taken by a girl singing to the accompaniment of the guitar. *The Bridesmaid* (Plate XXXVIII) relates eagerly all she has seen and done. The exposition here is an unusual one in Zorn, as it is purely narrative. The etcher prefers to seize his *motifs* as simply and immediately as possible. He surprises *Anna doing her hair* and the girl *Mending*.

His yachting trips in the summer produced some fine pictures, *Cercles d'Eau* (Plate XLV) extended round the well-shaped body of a young woman who is bathing, *Summer* and *Edö* (Plate XLIV). The names of these etchings, which must sometimes be rather incomprehensible to English ears, are often taken from the place at which the etching or painting was executed. But wherever he worked it was always the same subject that captured Zorn's interest, the glorification of healthy, well-shaped nudity; it is only the locality that varies. During the years 1906 and 1909 there came in rapid succes-

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sion a series of important portraits, *M. and Mme. Atherton Curtis*, a double portrait with a fine calm tone (in which the two enthusiasts for art and collectors are portrayed against the background of a French Gothic Madonna), and some important representatives of the spiritual culture of France, *D'Estournelles de Constant*; *Rodin*, a powerfully graphic impromptu with the master's white-bearded head thrown back in a fit of laughter; *Berthelot*, the aged and invalid scientist; *Anatole France* (Plate XLII), in his monk-like working cowl, discussing some exquisite subject, his gentle ironical eyes fixed on the spectator and his hands moving with a sceptical gesture; *Alfred Beurdeley*; *Fru Wentzel Hagelstam* interestedly trying on *A ring*; and *Prince Paul Troubetzkoy*, the sculptor (Plate XLIX) modelling Zorn's statue, which was executed both in full figure and as a bust, the artist's concentration on his work being energetically expressed. The etchings of *Gustaf V* and *Queen Sophia* (Plate XLVII) are from the well-known portraits in oil, executed with a *bravura* that immediately brings to mind long, wet brushwork. *August Strindberg*, whose personality must indeed have been the absolute opposite of that of the healthy, jovial Zorn, is portrayed with emphasis on the wandering, visionary look of this aged man of genius. The portraits of *Sir Ernest Cassel* and *President Taft* show us authoritative and self-confident personalities.

During the last years of his life Zorn completed his imposing series of portrait etchings with two magnificent plates, *Self-portrait in wolf-skins* and *Vicke* (Plate LX). The former shows a masterly treatment of the material, just as in the oil painting of the same subject, an effective contrast between the sculptural firmness of the face and the luxurious softness of the fur. The latter shows us the artist *Vicke Andrén* singing an old drinking song—a Swedish *Sir Toby* amongst us temperate moderns. Composed with a powerful diagonal line over the large plate, the portrait presents a gorgeous picture of the singer, filled with the Dionysian inspiration of his song. The

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same thing can be said of this as of the portrait of Faure, the singer : it is not "an open mouth," but "a mouth that opens."

About 1911 we get a group of exceedingly important etchings with *motifs* from the life of the people. The *Mona* (Plate L) and *Djos Mats* (Plate LIII) are two subjects of old age with quite a Rembrandtesque pathos. They are also Rembrandt-*esque* in the way in which the artist has made the light play over the old, furrowed faces. It may be pointed out that from his very earliest plates Zorn had received certain impressions from Rembrandt, the only etcher he himself admired and of whose etchings he had gathered together an unusually fine collection. In a little New Year's card of 1890 he has made a direct study in the manner of Rembrandt, and now and again, especially in the bold way of letting the shadow be thrown on a whole face or some important part of the composition, he showed that his study of this master's pictures had borne fruit in his own work.

Does not the etching of *Mona*, by its solemn frontal arrangement and the profound expression of calm, become something greater than the portrait of a loved and venerated mother? Does it not become an act of homage, humble, and at the same time proud, to the tenacious, placid and peaceful vitality that has been celebrated in song, from Stjernhjelm, our first modern poet, to Karlfeldt, our greatest living one, by men who have felt the happiness of having sprung from a strong old people like the Dalecarlians? *Djos Mats* is her male counterpart. The figure is set in a masterly way in the clear air surrounding the very slightly indicated bald head, and causing the darkness in the visionary gaze of the aged man to be felt strongly and movingly.

With these are to be grouped two other plates of old people, *An old Soldier* (Plate LIV) and *The Beadle*, and in 1919 another link in the chain appears, the *Dalecarlian peasant*. A contrast to these, fresh in its spirit of youth, is the gaily smiling picture of *Skerikulla Vallkulla*, showing the Sabbath



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peace of the mountain farm. It has an even and beautiful tone, harmonizing well with the calm spirit of the *motif*. During Zorn's very last years the pictures from Dalecarlia were augmented by a new version of the *Dance at Gopsmor*, with more power and a swifter *tempo* instead of the atmospheric finesse of the first plate, and by *Ols Maria* singing to the accompaniment of the lute, a female counterpart of the above-mentioned *Vicke*.

During the last years of Zorn's life the studies in the nude became numerous and valuable, perhaps too well known to need detailed description here. The most prominent are *The Precipice, Wet* (Plate LI), *The Three Graces*, *The Ford*, *Frightened* (Plate LV), *The seaward Skerries*, and *Dagmar*. The last plate, after the previously mentioned painting of the same title, is perhaps the finest. It possesses a soft, dark tone fascinating in its effect. The studies of the nude from 1913 to 1915 were exuberantly robust. The Dalecarlian lass sitting on a chair braiding her hair with *A Ribbon*, or standing at the fence with an extensive back turned to the onlooker, or stretching herself still sleepy in *Early*, or sitting half-dressed, is a peasant type that certainly has more health than grace.

From the last few years there are etchings of the nude such as *The Swan* (Plate LVIII)—a woman standing on a headland in justifiable feminine self-consciousness, her bathing-dress streaming around her like a pair of wings—or the finely drawn *Dalälven*.

From a purely technical point of view Zorn almost consistently followed in his etchings the same technique as he had developed for himself. Only in three plates from 1898, *Breakfast* and the two versions of *The laughing Model*, has he experimented, in the studio of the clever etcher Tallberg, outside the sphere of pure needle etching, with a soft ground. He has generally despised the use of technical artifices such as aquatint, and has only rarely made use of the roulette as a means of producing the roundness and plasticity that his decidedly sculptural conception desired to emphasize. As a rule



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he achieved his plastic effect simply with line etching and skilful hand-scraping of the plate, causing the colour to spread and giving a light, shady tone to the dark portions. After the biting process the burin was sometimes used to give the finishing touch. As the years went by Zorn used to make fewer and fewer alterations—sometimes these are almost imperceptible—once the plate was etched. Here in his later plates we find the same state of affairs as in his painting; the work does not lie in the etching but is behind it; having once found his path by conscientious and persistent study, it was easy for him to follow it, but difficult for his successors. He has, as we have indicated, occasionally given us some unfinished and unimportant plates, but in the work of no other Swedish etcher do we find so much solid study and personal feeling, the twin foundations of all that is important in art.

### LIST OF ETCHINGS BY ANDERS ZORN\*

- |                         |      |                                       |
|-------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|
|                         | 1882 | 17 Grandmother II                     |
| 1 Axel Herman Haig I    |      | 18 " III                              |
| 2 " " II                |      | 19 Manuela                            |
| 3 The Sisters           |      | 20 Spanish Woman                      |
| 4 Maternal Delight I    |      | 21 Consuela I                         |
| 5 " " II                |      | 22 " II                               |
|                         | 1883 | 23 Christian Aspelin                  |
| 6 Maternal Delight III  |      |                                       |
| 7 The Cousins           |      | 1885                                  |
| 8 Mourning I            |      | 24 Miss Law                           |
| 9 " " II                |      | 25 Executioner from Sieben-<br>bürgen |
| 10 Pepita               |      |                                       |
| 11 On the Thames        |      | 1886                                  |
|                         | 1884 | 26 Turkish Lady with female<br>slave  |
| 12 Nude Study           |      | 27 Turkish Cemetery                   |
| 13 Mary                 |      | 28 Odalisque sleeping                 |
| 14 Rêve d'Amour         |      |                                       |
| 15 Axel Herman Haig III |      | 1888                                  |
| 16 Grandmother I        |      | 29 Carl Snoilsky                      |

\* The Editor is indebted to Messrs. Bukowski, publishers, of Stockholm, for permission to reprint this list of etchings from Dr. Karl Asplund's ZORN'S ENGRAVED WORK, Vol. II.

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- |   |      |                                       |      |
|---|------|---------------------------------------|------|
| 30 La Feria                                 | 1889 | 64 The Storm (Plate XXXI)             |      |
| 31 The Little Bather                        |      | 65 Le Réveil                          |      |
| 32 Self-portrait                            |      | 66 Chess-players                      |      |
| 33 Antonin Proust                           |      | 67 Mme. Simon I                       |      |
| 34 Rosita Mauri                             |      | 68 " II (Pl. XXXII)                   |      |
|   | 1890 | 69 Gerda Grönberg I                   |      |
| 35 New Year's Card                          |      |                                       | 1892 |
| 36 Lawyer Wade                              |      | 70 Gerda Grönberg II                  |      |
| 37 Lady reading (Mrs. Emma Zorn)            |      | 71 " III                              |      |
| 38 Tired Model                              |      | 72 Sitting model                      |      |
| 39 Première                                 |      | 73 En Omnibus (Pl. XXXVII)            |      |
| 40 The Big Brewery                          |      | 74 Ernest Renan (Plate XL)            |      |
| 41 The Little Brewery                       |      | 75 Olga Bratt                         |      |
| 42 At Folkestone                            |      |                                       | 1893 |
| 43 Zorn and his wife                        |      | 76 Gerda Hagborg I (" Pour plaire ")  |      |
| 44 In the Open Air                          |      | 77 Gerda Hagborg II                   |      |
| 45 Girls bathing                            |      | 78 Georg von Rosen                    |      |
| 46 With her Child                           |      | 79 Reading (Mr. and Mrs. Ch. Deering) |      |
| 47 Mrs. Emma Zorn                           |      | 80 A Toast I                          |      |
| 48 Mme. Armand Dayot                        |      | 81 " II                               |      |
|   | 1891 | 82 Henry Marquand                     |      |
| 49 In the Studio                            |      | 83 Venus de la Villette               |      |
| 50 Mme. Georges May I                       |      | 84 John Alexander                     |      |
| 51 " II                                     |      |                                       | 1894 |
| 52 Mme. Salomon                             |      | 85 Isabella Gardener                  |      |
| 53 J. B. Faure                              |      | 86 An Irish Girl (or Annie)           |      |
| 54 Fisherman at St. Ives                    |      | 87 Sunday morning (or 1892)           |      |
| 55 Valse (Plate XXXIV)                      |      | 88 Mme. Lamm I                        |      |
| 56 Max Lieberman                            |      | 89 " II                               |      |
| 57 Dalecarlian peasant woman                |      | 90 Young people bathing               |      |
| 58 Per Hasselberg                           |      | 91 Mother bathing                     |      |
| 59 H.R.H. Prince Eugen of Sweden            |      | 92 My Model and my Boat               |      |
| 60 Young Norwegian at the piano (Miss Gran) |      | 93 Mrs. Armour                        |      |
| 61 Morning                                  |      |                                       | 1895 |
| 62 Girl with a Cigarette I                  |      | 94 Paul Verlaine I                    |      |
| 63 " " " II                                 |      | 95 " II                               |      |
|   |      | 96 Souvenir (or The Guitar)           |      |
|   |      | 97 La Grande Baigneuse                |      |

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- |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 98 Mr. and Mrs. Fürstenburg  | 130 Peasant Girl from Rättrik   |
| 99 Pontus Fürstenberg and    | 131 Study from Model            |
| his Wife standing near       | 132 King Oscar II. I            |
| Hasselberg's "Frog"          | 133 " " II                      |
| 100 Effet de Nuit I          | (Plate XXXIII)                  |
| 101 " II                     | 134 The Breakfast               |
| 102 Anna Wallenberg          | 135 Laughing Model I            |
| 1896                         | 136 " " II                      |
| 103 Nude Study I             | 137 Surprised                   |
| 104 " II                     | 138 Billiards                   |
| 105 " III                    | 139 Maud Cassel (Mrs. Ashley)   |
| 106 Albert Besnard and his   | 140 On the Ice                  |
| Model                        | 141 On the Ice at Mora          |
| 107 Gerda Hagborg III        | 142 Frederick Keppel I          |
| 108 Mrs. Potter Palmer       | 143 " " II                      |
| 109 Bather (Evening) I       | 1899                            |
| 110 " " II                   | 144 Grover Cleveland I          |
| 111 " " III                  | 145 " " II                      |
| 1897                         | 146 Mrs. Cleveland I            |
| 112 Effet de Nuit III        | 147 " " II                      |
| 113 Mrs. Nagel               | 148 On the Atlantic             |
| 114 Augustus Saint Gaudens I | 149 Model closing door          |
| 115 " " II                   | 150 Self-portrait with Model II |
| 116 S. Loeb                  | 1900                            |
| 117 E. R. Bacon              | 151 Maja (Plate XLIII)          |
| 118 Emma, Girl from Mora     | 152 Madonna (Plate XXXV)        |
| 119 Carl Larsson             | 153 Kol Margit                  |
| 120 Anders Zorn, 1897        | 154 H.R.H. Princess Inge-       |
| 121 Zorn and his Model       | borg of Sweden I                |
| 122 Peasant from Mora (Pers  | 155 H.R.H. Princess Inge-       |
| Mats) I                      | borg of Sweden II               |
| 1898                         | 156 Mrs. Runeberg               |
| 123 Peasant from Mora (Pers  | 157 The Guitar-player           |
| Mats) II                     | 158 Mrs. Emma Zorn              |
| 124 Nils Kreuger             | 159 Colonel Lamont I (whole-    |
| 125 Georg Arsenius           | length)                         |
| 126 Peasant Girl at Window   | 160 Billy Mason                 |
| 127 Girl's Head              | 161 Au Piano (Plate XLVI)       |
| 128 Old Ballad I             |                                 |
| 129 " II                     |                                 |

# ETCHINGS

- |  |      |   |
|--|------|---|
| 1901                                       | 192  | Musique en famille                            |
| 162 Mrs. Cotton I (Buste de femme)         | 193  | The Bridesmaid (Plate XXXVIII)                |
| 163 Mrs. Cotton II                         | 194  | Mending                                       |
| 164 Sitting Negress                        | 195  | Ida (Plate XXXIX)                             |
| 165 Standing Negress                       | 196  | Berit   |
| 166 Miss Henop (Mrs. Robert P. Tytus)      | 1906 |   |
| 167 Miss Lurman                            | 197  | Kesti, a Mora peasant                         |
| 168 Mrs. Thompson Seton                    | 198  | Dance at Gopsmor                              |
| 169 Standing Model                         | 199  | Hemulä I                                      |
| 1903                                       | 200  | " II  |
| 170 The Storehouse                         | 201  | Anna doing her hair                           |
| 171 Young Girl from Mora (Krakberg's Anna) | 202  | The First Pose (Pl. XLI)                      |
| 172 The New Ballad                         | 203  | Sandhamn                                      |
| 173 Mrs. Granberg                          | 204  | Mr. and Mrs. Atherton Curtis                  |
| 174 Before the Stove                       | 205  | Anatole France (Pl. XLII)                     |
| 175 Nanette                                | 206  | D'Estournelles de Constant                    |
| 176 A Dark Corner                          | 207  | Marcellin Berthelot                           |
| 1904                                       | 208  | Auguste Rodin                                 |
| 177 Olandine                               | 209  | A Ring  |
| 178 Colonel Lamont II (bust)               | 210  | Alfred Beurdeley (or 1907)                    |
| 179 " " III "                              | 1907 |   |
| 180 John Hay                               | 211  | Fredrik Martin                                |
| 181 Self-portrait, 1904 I                  | 212  | Summer  |
| 182 " " II                                 | 213  | Cercles d'Eau I (Pl. XLV)                     |
| 183 Travelling Companion (Mr. Ch. Deering) | 214  | " " II  |
| 184 Emma Rasmussen (Plate XXXVI)           | 215  | Edö (Plate XLIV)                              |
| 185 Mrs. Kip                               | 216  | The Master-smith                              |
| 186 Self-portrait with inscription "1904"  | 217  | Bosl Anders, clockmaker at Mora               |
| 187 Village Violinist                      | 218  | Knut Kjellberg                                |
| 1905                                       | 1908 |   |
| 188 Uno Stadius                            | 219  | Prince Paul Troubetzkoy I, whole length       |
| 189 Albert Engström                        | 1909 |   |
| 190 Theodore Roosevelt                     | 220  | Prince Paul Troubetzkoy II, bust (Plate XLIX) |
| 191 Betty Nansen                           | 221  | Oxenstierna (Pl. XLVIII)                      |



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- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 222 "Aurore"                  | 258 The Fence                |
| 223 King Gustaf V.            | 259 Three Sisters            |
| 224 Queen Sophia (Pl. XLVII)  | 260 Shallow                  |
| 225 C. F. Liljevalch          | 261 Elin (or 1914)           |
| 226 Sir Ernest Cassel         | 1914                         |
| 227 Gerda Lundequist          | 262 "Berserk"                |
| 228 The new Maid              | 263 Early                    |
| 229 Precipice                 | 264 Frida                    |
| 230 Hugo Tigerschiöld         | 265 Crown Princess Margaret  |
| 1910                          | of Sweden (Pl. LVII)         |
| 231 Model reading             | 266 Gulli I (Plate LIX)      |
| 232 August Strindberg         | 267 The Bed-stool            |
| 233 The Frog                  | 268 Hårtäng (Seaweed-wreath) |
| 234 Näskulla                  | 1915                         |
| 235 Seaweed                   | 269 Dalarö                   |
| 236 Model before picture      | 270 The Swan (Plate LVIII)   |
| 237 The Three Graces          | 1916                         |
| 238 Two Bathers               | 271 Self-portrait, 1916      |
| 1911                          | 272 On the Sands             |
| 239 Brushwood                 | 273 Bust                     |
| 240 President William H. Taft | 274 My Models                |
| 241 Wet (Plate LI)            | 275 The Two                  |
| 242 Self-portrait, 1911       | 1917                         |
| 243 Mona (Plate L)            | 276 Gopsmor Cottage          |
| 244 Djos Mats (Plate LIII)    | 277 On Hemsö Island          |
| 245 Beadle                    | 278 Alder                    |
| 246 An Old Soldier (Pl. LIV)  | 279 Sappo                    |
| 247 At Prayer (Plate LII)     | 280 Cabin                    |
| 1912                          | 1918                         |
| 248 Skerikulla (a Skeri girl) | 281 Gulli II                 |
| 249 Frightened (Plate LV)     | 282 Vicke (Plate LX)         |
| 250 The Ford                  | 283 Water-nymphs             |
| 251 Dagmar                    | 1919                         |
| 252 Vallkulla                 | 284 Dalecarlian Peasant      |
| 253 Prof. John Berg           | 285 Dal River (Plate LXI)    |
| 254 The Hair-ribbon           | 286 Pilot                    |
| 1913                          | 287 Ols Maria                |
| 255 The Letter (Plate LVI)    | 288 Balance                  |
| 256 Eka                       | 289 Against the Current      |
| 257 Seaward Skerries          |                              |



"THE STORM"





"MADAME SIMON"—II. (1891)







" KING OSCAR II. OF SWEDEN "—II. (1898)











"EMMA RASMUSSEN." (1904)





"EN OMNIBUS"







"THE BRIDESMAID." (1905)





"IDA." (1905)







1893  
"ERNEST RENAN"





"THE FIRST POSE." (1906)







"ANATOLE FRANCE." (1906)





"MAJA"







“EDÖ.” (1907)





"CERCLES D'EAU." (1907)







"AU PIANO"











"OXENSTIERNA." (1909)





" PRINCE PAUL TROUBETZKOY "—II. (1909)





"MONA." (1911)







"AT PRAYER." (1911)





"DJOS MATS." (1911)







"AN OLD SOLDIER." (1911)





"FRIGHTENED." (1912)





"THE LETTER." (1913)







"THE CROWN PRINCESS MARGARET OF SWEDEN." (1914)











"VICKE." (1918)





"DAL RIVER." (1919)



## VI. SCULPTURE

In the portrait of Zorn at the Uffizi Gallery we can see the master busy modelling in plaster of Paris a figure of his wife, vividly elegant in the style of the period. But it was especially the favourite material of his childhood, wood, that he liked to work with during his leisure hours; there was always in him something of the old well-known skill in handiwork and fondness of quiet and practical work at small things that is characteristic of the Dalecarlian men.

Ordinary birchwood became his favourite material—the same material that our mediæval Scandinavian sculptors liked to use. He was, as a matter of fact, one of the few individuals in Sweden who appreciated the work of these old sculptors. It has been said that wood is the best plaything. It can represent anything; it can assume so many fantastic forms that we grown-ups do not suspect.

With this material he achieved a strong artistic effect in his little bust *Grandmother*, somewhat carelessly carved, with a sort of accidental refinement à la Rodin. How wonderfully this material—hard, pure, light wood—is adapted for the face of this old woman, dry and fine, like wood! The little object is a great work of art. There is a deep human feeling pervading it, a genuine and true appreciation of kinship woven of reverence and love.

During the course of the years he executed in wood some firmly shaped statuettes of women, among them *Gryvel* (1905), a crouching little round-limbed creature. And during his manhood he still occasionally revived his youthful skill in carving beautifully shaped objects in wood, the handle of a fan (exhibited at the Salon in 1890), a shrine in the shape of a bed, with a woman in a crouching position (Plate LXII), a sheath-knife, or some wooden spoons with the handles carved as figures. He even tried his hand at pure artistic handicraft in 1913 with a table inlaid with different kinds of wood, a symbol of the various branches of his own many-sided activity.



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But he was not much interested in the modern movements in applied art about which many capable young artists were enthusiastic in Sweden. His tastes were in another direction; he was a traditionalist who found his ideals in the silverwork of the Renaissance and the woodwork of the old peasant culture, and he was passionately fond of these things.

When working in clay, plaster or bronze, he was a naturalist of the first water. By far his best work of this sort is the little group called *Faun and Nymph*, executed in bronze in 1896 (one copy in the Salon de Paris, 1896, one in the National Museum in Stockholm). It depicts with an expression of violent strength the muscular faun's passionate embrace of a nymph whose luxurious figure is reminiscent of Jordaen's work. The surface of the bronze is rough and unpolished and its porous character reminds one of the patina of antique figures excavated from the earth. The little group is a happy find, a thing of rare originality, which caused so great a master as Rodin to state, in the dithyrambic enthusiasm of an artist's banquet, that there were only two great sculptors—himself and Zorn!

Amongst the standing female figures designed by Zorn during the 19th century the best known is the fountain, *The Morning Bath* (1908), one copy of which was placed in front of the Academy of Art in Stockholm, another in the artist's garden at Mora. It shows an erect, supple Dalecarlian girl squeezing a sponge; she seems to have stepped out of one of his very plastic oil paintings. Like its sister statues, one of 1909 and one of 1911, it is depicted with a faithful realism that almost suggests a model in a biological museum. The architectonic element in statuary that is so eagerly demanded at the present day was foreign to the trend of Zorn's art. And yet he has executed one of our country's most powerful and sterling historical monuments and has sketched a remarkable suggestion for another.

In the year 1519, during one of the most deeply humiliating periods in Swedish history, when the country was on the way

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being transformed into a Danish province, a young nobleman, Gustav Erikson Vasa, appeared in Mora and tried to persuade the distinguished and fearless men there to take up arms against their oppressors. At first the attempt was a failure because of the hesitation of the peasants, and the young patriot set off on skis to reach the Norwegian boundary, prepared to leave the country in despair and abandon his attempt. Near the frontier, however, he was overtaken by ski-runners who had been sent to call him back, as the Mora peasants had changed their minds and were willing to take up arms. The rising that then occurred ended with the expulsion of the Danes, and the young nobleman became the founder and first king of Modern Sweden, perhaps the greatest figure in our history. This is the historic event, familiar to every Swede from his childhood, that the monument (Plate LXIII) commemorates at the precise spot where the historic speech was made. It is the solitary man in the decisive moment that is depicted with the touch of genius. The head is thrown back, the half-open mouth is sending forth treacherous, persuasive words against the inert and the unwilling, the eyes are half closed and the fingers are bent. It is a young hero who stands here alone, erect, bearing the burden of the great call that threatens to become too heavy for him. It is the final effort before the temporary defeat that is soon to be turned into victory. We understand with what feelings of deep veneration and proud solidarity the strenuous artist proceeded to his work. The statue is realistic, simple and dignified; it is its spiritual expression, rather than its form, that is monumental. But that also suggests the monumental. As an expression of the Swedish spirit this statue is justly one of the most popular works of art in Sweden. Zorn, the patriot and Dalecarlian, chose a similar subject for his second historical statue, which never got beyond the stage of a sketch. It is Engelbrekt, the Dalecarlians' own popular hero, who a few decades earlier than Gustav Vasa liberated the country from the Danes, a liberation which did not, however, last so

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long. "Ye lyttil man" is represented riding on his lumbering mining horse up to one of the Danish castles, and with a simple and dignified gesture calling upon it to surrender. The posture is bold and original. The horse stands stiffly, the rider is sitting upright in the saddle. It is easy to see that the source of inspiration for the form was one of the many primitive wooden figures of St. George that occur so often in Swedish churches. St. George was one of the most popular mediæval saints in Sweden. His fight with the dragon became a symbol of our struggle for freedom against the Danes, now our friends and peaceful neighbours, but who at that time constituted a permanent threat against our national liberty. In this respect the choice of the iconographical prototype for the statue of Engelbrekt was certainly an inspiration of genius.

In 1920 the aged master had to carry out a task which he approached with a heavy heart. He wished to adorn the tomb of his dead mother with a portrait in relief. The relief is very low, in fact merely an outline with some vaguely modelled nuances. The head appears against the low rectangle of an old Dalecarlian window; it is patinated entirely in dark blue, as if the artist had wished only to evoke a vision of the dead woman's shade. It is a beautiful thought, but scarcely a sculptural idea.

But Zorn, the sculptor, was to finish his work with a production quite in his own spirit. During his last yachting cruise in the summer of 1920 he did not paint. He was already tired and broken. But his hands had to have something to keep them busy, and they shaped in plastilina one of his favourite luxuriant female forms holding a broken pitcher. This charming figure (Plate LXIV) was suggested by a picture of Jordaens in his collection, a master whom Zorn, as we can easily understand, appreciated highly. The little statuette, one of the finest he made, is perfect; the artist had thought to carry it out on a large scale as a figure for a fountain. Both in *motif* and in form it is a worthy finish to Zorn's lifework.











STATUE OF GUSTAV VASA, AT MORA. (1903)







## VII. CONCLUSION

A feeling for the historical connection of style is being more and more strongly developed in all art research and criticism. This inevitably gives rise, in the case of all important work, to the question of its spiritual genesis, its connection with earlier art that will enable us to look at each individual work in what we consider is a more correct way. But this is a question that may be fatal to the seeker after truth. There is probably nothing that can make artists so desperate as a hint that their work is not entirely their own. But such masters as Zorn have enough originality to be able to admit that they have received strong impressions from earlier artists. And Zorn had instructors both of his own day and of the seventeenth century who were akin to him in spirit. Armand Dayot writes in "L'Art et les Artistes": "Son pinceau, frère des pinceaux des Velasquez, des Goya, des Manet, des Sargent, se promène librement chargé de riche matière; et sous les caresses somptueuses et prolongées, naissent comme les fleurs sous les rayons du soleil, les splendeurs lumineuses des formes nues et les étincelantes profondeurs des ciels et des eaux."

This is an indication of the noble family of spirited painters to which Zorn belongs; to this notable group might be added other names of artists whose influence on Zorn was beneficial. I should be inclined to look upon Goya as a very distant relative; and rather than Sargent influencing Zorn, the latter has influenced Sargent and the whole school of which this *virtuoso* is the greatest representative, a school too well known to the English reader for me to venture to say anything further. Velázquez was certainly always Zorn's greatest favourite among the earlier painters. After a journey to Rome he declared that with all the pictorial splendours of the Italian Renaissance to choose from, it was Velázquez's *Innocent X* that he admired most, certainly referring to the portrait in the Palazzo Doria. And Velázquez's brushwork, soft and powerful at the same time, and his cool and sober grey colouring,



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have undeniably left distinct traces on Zorn's art. This is the case, for instance, in the portrait of Coquelin. At any rate there was more of Velázquez in his work than of Frans Hals, whose name is often mentioned in connection with Zorn. It is, of course, chiefly his temperament, the nature of his power, that he has in common with the great Dutchman; the *factura* in the pictures of the two artists is very dissimilar; on the one hand the "caresses somptueuses et prolongées" of the brush, to use Dayot's words; and on the other a veritable discharge of flashes of light in the colour, which is seldom found in Zorn's paintings. His regard for Manet is shown not only by the fine work of that artist that he has presented to the National Museum in Stockholm, but by much of the delicate grey painting and refined lighting effects in his earlier works. But as the years passed he forsook the ideals of his youth and found more interest in Bastien Lepage than in the great master of impressionism.

With the older portrait-painters he certainly had other affinities. His portraits often show an elegance and broad and certain strokes that cause one immediately to think of Raeburn. These names are meant to indicate the artists with whom Zorn had a spiritual affinity. If, after the test of centuries, he maintains his position as one of the great painters—and of course nothing is more difficult to prophesy—it will be this group of immortal masters that will receive him, together with such contemporaries as Sargent and Liebermann.

It is on form and colour that painting is based, and sometimes the one, sometimes the other is predominant. It is interesting to see how Zorn's art varies in this respect. As a young painter in water-colours he was, to a great extent, an artist of form; he modelled a face with sharp contrasts so that everything has a plasticity rich in details, like his own wood sculpture. Then the form became softer, while at the same time the colour blossomed and melted into gold and silver; it became mobile and gliding in the impressionistic conception of the word; soft and living in the moulding of female bodies

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and the portrayal of materials during the 'nineties. But as the years passed the plastic element appeared once more, though with varying strength, in the foregrounds. The studies of models and the portraits of the later years have sometimes a highly elaborated form, a smooth surface. And in the works of Zorn's last years we get a simplification, a striving for monumental effects at the expense of richness and sensitiveness.

Zorn's sense of colour, the most vital element in painting, increased in the course of time, just as Nature herself is able to vary her colours, if such a comparison is permissible. The art of his boyhood shows no special skill in the management of the colour, which is cold and meagre, grey and blue and brown in a sharp light, before the whole flora of the palette puts forth its buds and blossoms in warm sunshine. During the favoured years of his youth in Paris, in the earliest oil paintings and the later water-colours, his colouring shows tones of honey and pollen and sunlit spring skies. Even his favourite grey has a mild vernal tone; it is living and breezy.

Then the colour rapidly ripened to deeper tones, the sap of Midsummer Eve and the light golden tone disappeared. Now we find the old colours, green and red, from the peasant fabrics of his native parts. We often get colour instead of colouring, and the grey tone, the grey of Velázquez, becomes more ashen. The autumnal tone soon appears on his palette. While the form becomes larger and heavier, the colour is more and more simplified. But he always set his face against the highly intensified luminosity, with colours diluted with turpentine, and the thin *factura* that under the influence of impressionism captivated many artists of the same period as Zorn—not always to the advantage of their art.

But painting is not merely colour and form, it is also spirit. By the side of the two painters just mentioned, Sargent and Liebermann, with whose art of portraiture and impressionistic play of the brush he had much in common, Zorn will probably appear as a more vigorous figure, an artist who, amid all

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his virtuosity, had strong roots in the peculiar culture of his native land and a deep undertone of masculine sensualism and feeling for life.

If we should venture to describe roughly the curve of Zorn's spiritual development, we find at first the youthful energy and the quick hand which rapidly advanced him to a playful but solid mastery and correct drawing. Calm and confident in victory, he determined at twenty to be a success, and by the age of twenty-five he had achieved his ambition. But there soon arose within him a spirit that rescued him from being an empty *faiseur*, the warm and joyous feeling of life that pulsates so quickly in the early oil paintings. Here the inner success, the deepening of his character, is more important than the external accomplishment, which made him a world-famed portrait-painter and caused his paintings from the nude to be sought after, but which, on the other hand, brought with it the risk of empty and hasty work. Then at the end of the 'nineties he took firmer and firmer hold of the memories of his native place, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that they took hold of him, and his art increased in breadth and impressiveness. Rudbeck, a Swedish scholar who lived during the period of our greatness, had as his favourite idea the naïve impression that Scandinavia was the Atlantis of the old historians. For Zorn Mora became a sort of Rudbeckian Atlantis or *Manhem*, from which the vital power of his art streamed forth, and the play of his brush suggests an intense pathos, a deep undertone of "Swedishness" which is never lost.

The elegant, enamoured, flattering sensualism of his youth obtains during his middle age a more impressive, more powerful tone, a northern echo of Rubens' exuberant Flemish hymn to life, never giving way to grotesque exaggeration, and with calm superiority turning a deaf ear to indignation or well-meant protests. With the desperate stubbornness of a child or a genius he asserted his will to act according to his own inner light, both in matters of art and life, and in later years he



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occupied a peculiarly autocratic position. But he knew that wealth has its duties. His great work for Mora culture has already been indicated; this extended to all Swedish culture, and his private help to friends and artists was always offered with a kind heart and an open hand. I cannot refrain from giving a story to illustrate this side of his character. At an artists' dinner—it was rather late and everyone was in high spirits—Zorn was sitting by an old friend whose finances were not particularly flourishing, and was urging to be allowed to lend him a small sum towards the rent of his studio. Zorn was not only unyielding but, contrary to his custom, was even irritated at his neighbour's obstinacy. Finally he whispered to him in explanation something like this: "Look here, I think it's wrong of an old friend like you, who knows how fond I am of you, to keep me begging about such a little thing when I am so well off and you are not." And a banknote, fabulously large in relation to his neighbour's finances, was thrust silently and unnoticed to him under the table.

Finally, the enormous measure of Zorn's strength and will is the formula of his artistic personality. With what joy he went to work when an idea was to be put into concrete shape on a canvas or an etched plate! His friend Carl Larsson relates that when he sat as a model Zorn "glared at him as if he would eat him up," a feeling that he was probably not the only sitter to experience. With Zorn it was not a question of the jargon of the studio, with its talk of "the emancipation of art." In the depth of his heart he would rather conquer the subject, retain it, explain it, and communicate to others in his own way the pleasure his eyes had experienced. He did not care to talk about the theory of art; his theory was simple enough. He once explained to me the joy he felt in revealing the beauty of a subject through his brush, in making the spectator stop and look at Nature in a new way, a Nature more rich and beautiful—more "Zornesque." His love of life made him inclined to take all that life had to offer, his pride as an artist made him give something in return. And united to gifts of rare pleni-

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tude this artistic impulse has granted us many great and original works.

KARL ASPLUND

(Translated by Henry Alexander, M.A.)



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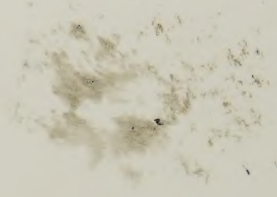
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